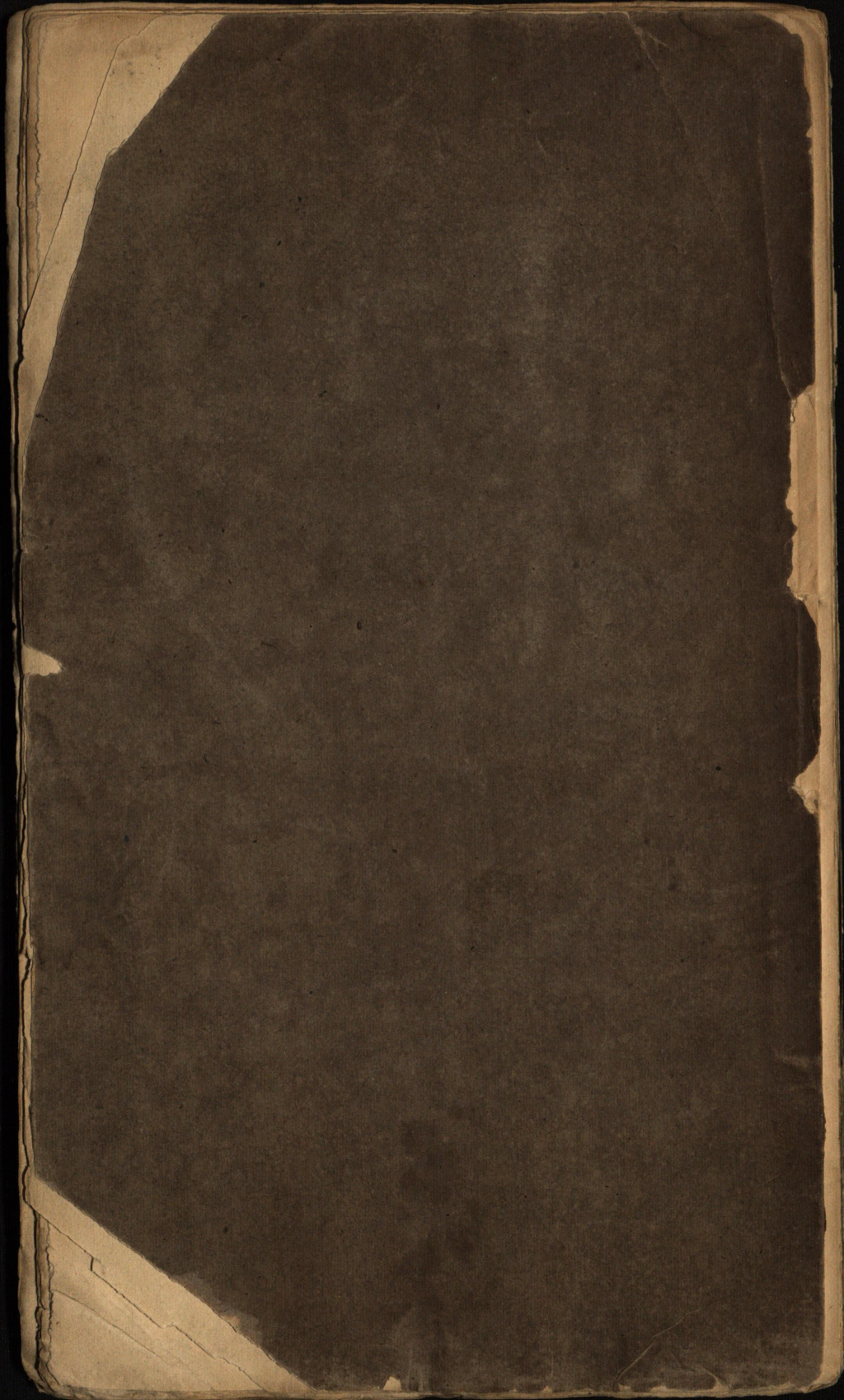


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TWO ESSAYS;

PREFACE.

ONE

ON THE EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY,

THE OTHER

ON THE SABBATH.

BY THE LATE

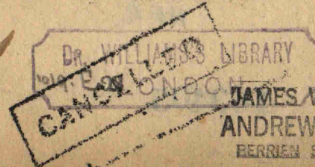
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TWO ESSAYS

ON THE EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY

ON THE SABBATH

JOHN SIMPSON

PUBLISHED BY R. H. HUNTLEY, SUCCESSOR TO J. H. HUNTLEY,
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PREFACE.

THE Editor of this Pamphlet cannot feel satisfied in suffering it to go to the press without regretting his inability to have published it sooner, which arose from many circumstances of a private nature.

These are the only Essays the Author has left behind him in a state for publication; to comply with whose wishes or intentions the Editor esteems it his most pleasing and bounden duty. He has done nothing in any manner to alter the originals, but has laid them before the public in the same state in which he found them.

J. W. S.

Rearsby, October, 1815.

FEB 14 1816

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A. W. A.

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ANSWERS OBJECTION CHRISTIANITY ESSAY I.

ANSWERS

TO THE

Objections against Christianity,

FROM ITS WANT OF EFFICACY,

AND

From its being the Occasion of great Evils.

ANSWERS
TO THE
OBJECTIONS AGAINST CHRISTIANITY,
FROM ITS

Want of Efficacy in the Reformation of Mankind,

AND

FROM ITS OCCASIONING GREAT EVILS.

THE author of the christian religion published it to the world as a means of rooting out vice, and of improvement in piety and virtue. Yet it is a lamentable fact, that many who name the name of Christ do not depart from iniquity. Multitudes have disgraced their profession by a conduct the reverse of that which the gospel dictates. From this the adversaries of Christianity have argued, that it is not from God. It shall be our present object to point out the fallacy of this inference. We shall endeavor to shew, that no reasonable objection can be brought against the divine authority of the religion of Jesus, from its not having been more effectual in reforming the lives of men.

By imputing a want of efficacy to the gospel, the objectors must mean either, first, that it has produced *no* good effects at all; or secondly, that it has not been *so* effectual as we should have *expected* a religion from God to have been; or thirdly, that it has not produced so *many*, or such *eminently* good effects as it is *naturally* fitted to produce.

We shall attempt to prove, that in the first of these senses the objection is not true; and that in the two following, it cannot furnish any solid argument against the divine origin of the christian revelation.

Whoever attentively peruses the gospel must be convinced that it has an undoubted natural tendency to produce the best effects on the dispositions and conduct of those who embrace it. It sets before us the most pure and sublime religious doctrines, the completest example of piety and virtue, the most perfect moral laws, enforced by the most powerful and persuasive motives. The religion of Jesus, therefore, having the greatest natural tendency to produce virtuous practice, its want of efficacy must certainly be ascribed to other causes. Now every day's observation convinces us that the evil dispositions and habits of mankind hinder them from rightly

improving the advantages they enjoy for increasing in the knowledge and practice of their duty. These furnish a natural and sufficient reason why those who are favored with the best means of attaining virtue, may yet not become virtuous. Any objection, therefore, from want of efficacy, can never apply to the christian institution, or detract from its real worth. It applies only to *professors* of the gospel who have not thoroughly imbibed, and been influenced by, the spirit of it.

Such is the genius and natural tendency of the christian revelation, that a person might with as much reason deny the continued existence of this religion in the world for more than 1700 successive years, as he might affirm that it has in *no* instance been effectual in the reformation of men. For who can believe that a public institution of any kind, whether civil or religious, could have subsisted for so long a period, without having produced some few, at least, of its genuine effects upon those who conformed to it. This argument would have considerable weight, even supposing it to have met with far greater obstructions than any institution of so long a continuance ever did meet with. It must, then, have much more influence with respect to a religion which has in many ages and nations

prevailed without violent opposition. The continued existence, therefore, of Christianity for so many ages, as a religion that has a strong natural tendency to reform the lives of men, affords ground for a presumptive argument that it must have produced this effect in some degree. And it applies with great additional force, when we consider the favorable reception which the gospel has met with in different parts of the world. This renders it morally certain that it must have produced some good effects, and makes it highly probable that it has produced many.

This question, however, must be decided, not by reasoning, but by facts.

The religion of Christ, by enjoining the pure and spiritual worship of one only all perfect God, and the imitation of his moral perfections, had a natural tendency to extirpate the principles and practice of *pagan idolatry* and superstition. Accordingly the histories of the persecutions of the primitive converts to the christian faith show, that they suffered death in the most dreadful forms rather than offer incense or sacrifice to any heathen God. "The increase of Christianity produced, in the countries where it was received, the over-

"throw and extinction of pagan idolatry, which
"after a feeble resistance perished about the
"sixth century. The Gods of the Babylonians,
"of the Egyptians, and of other Eastern nations,
"the Gods of Greece and Rome, have now
"long been entirely deserted and neglected.
"For this thousand years past they have not
"had one temple, or one worshipper, under
"heaven." *Jortin's Second Charge*, page 387.
Even Lord Bolingbroke acknowledges, "that
"the spread of Christianity has contributed to
"destroy polytheism and idolatry. *Works*, vol.
4, page 243. *Leland's Deistical Writers*,
vol. 2, page 319.

Christianity besides producing a speedy change in the *religion* of a great part of mankind, much *improved their morals*.

The earliest attestations to this fact are contained in the New Testament. From thence we learn, that the primitive disciples of Jesus imbibed the spirit of his religion, and were actuated by it. Paul after enumerating to the Corinthians, 1st *Cor.* ch. 6, ix to xi, several heinous vices that will exclude those who practise them from the kingdom of God, adds, "such
"were some of you, but ye have been washed, but
"ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justi-

"fied, by the name of the Lord Jesus, and
 "by the spirit of our God." To the Ephe-
 sians he writes, ch. 2, i to vii. "Unto you
 "who were dead in offences and sins, in
 "which ye formerly walked according to the
 "course of this world, among whom all of
 "us likewise lived formerly, fulfilling the will
 "of the flesh, hath God given life, and hath
 "raised us up together, through Christ Jesus."
 To the Colossians he says, ch. 1, xxi. "You
 "that were formerly aliens and enemies in
 "your mind, by wicked works, hath Christ
 "reconciled now by his death, to present you
 "holy and spotless, and irreproachable in his
 "sight; if ye continue stedfast in the faith."
 After specifying to them some particular sins
 which they formerly were in the habit of prac-
 tising, he adds, "but now ye also put off all
 these," to which he subjoins others, ch. 3
 v to viii. To Titus he writes, ch. 3, iii to vii.
 "We ourselves were formerly unwise, disobe-
 "dient, slaves to many evil desires and plea-
 "sures, living in maliciousness and envy, odious,
 "and hating one another, but God saved us
 "by renewing our minds through Jesus Christ."
 Peter thus addresses the converts from the
 Gentiles, 1st *Epis.* ch. 4, iii, iv. See *New-
 come's Notes on 1st Epis.* ch. 1. "The time
 "past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought

"the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in
 "lasciviousness, in evil desires, excess of wine,
 "revellings, banquetings, and wicked idolatries;
 "and they think it strange that ye run not
 "with them herein to the same excess of dis-
 "soluteness, speaking evil of you; but they
 "will give account to him that is prepared to
 "judge the living and the dead."

Justin Martyr, who flourished A.D. 140, and
 other early followers of Jesus, solemnly ap-
 pealed to well-known facts, in their apologies
 for the Christians presented to heathen em-
 perors, as proofs of their regularity and virtue.
 Eusebius, who flourished A.D. 315, bears this
 testimony to the probity of those who embraced
 the gospel—"What else does the name of
 "Christian denote but a man who by the know-
 "ledge and doctrine of Jesus Christ is brought
 "to the practice of sobriety, righteousness,
 "patience, fortitude, and the religious worship
 "of the one and only God over all."—*Eccles.*
Hist. lib. i. cap. 4.

These attestations of christian writers are
 confirmed by the encomiums which Heathens
 of distinguished rank and power made upon
 the Christians. Pliny, a philosopher, who had
 been a consul, when afterwards he was governor

of Bythnia, in an official letter to the emperor Trajan, not more than 40 years after the death of the Apostle Paul, (*Epis. lib. x. ep. 97.*) writes thus:—"Several who had been Christians, but then reviled Christ, affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as a God, and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. After receiving this account, I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two maid servants who were called ministers. But I have discovered nothing besides a bad and excessive superstition."—So he called the christian religion.

A valuable and unwilling testimony of a similar kind is given by Julian who died A. D. 363. He was educated in the christian faith, and embraced the gospel; but when he was made emperor renounced it, and became a zealous enemy to the Christians. In a letter which he sent to Arsacius, high priest of Ga-

latia, is the following passage:—"Why do we not look to that which has been the principal cause of the augmentation of impiety, (by which he means Christianity) humanity to strangers, care in burying the dead, and that sanctity of life of which they make such a show; all which things I will have to be really practised by our people. I will, therefore, that you persuade and even compel all the priests in Galatia to live soberly; otherwise do you depose them from the priestly office. You are also to erect hospitals in every city, that strangers also may share in our humanity; and not only those of our own religion, but others likewise, if they are necessitous. For it is a shame, when the impious Galileans relieve not only their own people, but ours also, that our poor should be neglected by us, and be left helpless and destitute."—*Lard. Heath. Test. ch. 46.*

Mr. Chubb, a modern opposer of the gospel, in his posthumous works, vol. 2, p. 40 to 43, comp. with p. 394 to 396, in Leland's Deist. Writ. vol. 1, p. 338, acknowledges, "that the ministry of Christ, and the power that attended it, seems at least in general to have terminated in the public good."

In every age since the first publication of the gospel, have there been characters formed upon it, which have reflected honor upon human nature. The New Testament contains several instances of this in the apostles and first disciples of Christ. "There have always been examples among Christians of the purest piety and virtue in times the most superstitious; which shows the salutary influence of Christianity in its most corrupted state. The heathen world produced no characters that can be compared with many in the most unfavorable times of Christianity. Of a principle of piety the Heathens must necessarily have been destitute, because they had not the very elements of it, in a knowledge of the unity, the attributes and providence of God; and all their views being confined to this world, they could not have the comprehension and elevation of mind of those who look beyond the grave."—*Priestley's Pref. to 3d vol. of Eccles. Hist. p. 22.*

The lives of Boyle, of Locke, of Newton, of Clarke, of Doddridge, of Lardner, with numbers more in this and other countries in which the gospel has been received, prove that the religion of Jesus has been the source of the noblest and most useful characters.

Besides the more eminent and distinguished patterns of piety and moral goodness among Christians, how many has the gospel reclaimed from vice to virtue? How many who were a dishonor to human nature and a bane to society, has it made respectable and useful in the world? How many has it prevented from sinking into the gulph of sin and misery? The widely beneficial influence which individuals and communities may have experienced from these effects is incalculable.

It should also be particularly noticed, that the best characters are formed by a process which eludes the notice of the public eye. The steady application of christian principles to the melioration of the heart and life, to the suppression of evil habits, and the formation of good ones, is an operation to which no one but God and a person's own conscience are witnesses. The wicked practices of professing Christians, on the contrary, are exposed to public view, and escape not the observation of the adversaries of the gospel. Hence the ground of objection from the misconduct of the nominal followers of Jesus, is much more obvious and apparent, than are the inward struggles of the sincere disciple in combating with his own evil desires, and the secret appli-

cation which he makes of the instructions of Christ for this purpose, and to mature his character in the practice of universal piety and virtue.

If Christians were disposed to retort upon the objectors to their religion, they might ask, do the lives of those who renounce Christianity manifest that the principles which they hold, have a better effect on the heart and life, than the principles of the gospel have?

Besides the influence which Christianity has had in forming the moral characters of individuals to excellence in true religion and virtue, we may observe that the mild and gentle spirit of it has been the means of *abolishing* many *savage and inhuman national practices*, and has greatly softened and decreased the *barbarity* of others.

Gentlemen of distinguished talents who have thrown out many things disrespectful to the christian revelation, have also borne a voluntary testimony to these salutary effects of it.

Lord Bolingbroke remarks, that Eusebius, in the first book of his evangelical preparation, has given a long catalogue of absurd laws and

customs, contradictory to the laws of nature in all ages and countries, for a very good purpose, to show in several instances, how such laws and customs as these have been reformed by the gospel.—*Bol. Works*, vol. 5, p. 101.

Mr. Gibbon writes as follows :—In the 5th century Christianity was embraced by almost all the barbarians who established their kingdoms on the ruins of the Western empire. It introduced an important change in their moral and political condition. In the most corrupt state of Christianity, the barbarians might learn justice from the law, and mercy from the gospel. It was the interest of the bishops, as well as their duty, to mollify by peaceful counsels the fierce spirit of the barbarians. And the union of Christians gradually produced the similar manners, and common jurisprudence, which have distinguished from the rest of mankind the independent and even hostile nations of modern Europe.—*Rise and Fall of Rom. Emp.* vol. 6, p. 272 to 275. vol. 10, p. 163, 242, 243.

Montesquieu, who always speaks with great respect of the christian religion, has these important observations :—Let us set before our eyes, on the one hand, the continual massacres of the kings and generals of the Greeks and

Romans, and on the other, the destruction of people and cities, by those famous conquerors, Timur Beg, and Jenghiz Kan, who ravaged Asia, and we shall see that we owe to Christianity, in government a certain political law, and in war, a certain law of nations; benefits which human nature can never sufficiently acknowledge. It is owing to this law of nations that, among us, victory leaves these great advantages to the conquered, life, liberty, laws, wealth, and always religion, when the conqueror is not blind to his own interest.—*Spir. of Laws*, b. 24, ch. 3.

The benevolent genius of the gospel has been a means of greatly softening, and, in some places, of abolishing *slavery*. In America and the West Indies where it does prevail, the laws relative to slaves are much more mild than they were among the Romans. In most of the states of Europe slavery is not practised. By the English law, if a slave sets his foot upon the country this immediately liberates him; and the trade in slaves is now abolished, by an express act of the British legislature. Dr. Robertson declares, that the humane spirit of the christian religion, contributed more than any other circumstance to introduce the practice of manumission of slaves.—*Progr. of Soc.*

in Europe. *Pref. to Hist. of Charles V.* p. 69, note 20.—Constantine, the first christian emperor, and his successors, made decrees which must have released multitudes from slavery.—*Jortin's Remarks*, v. 3. p. 219, &c.

Before the appearance of Christ the practice of *exposing infants* to perish was frequent in several of the most learned and polished nations of the world. Wherever Christianity prevailed this barbarous custom was entirely abolished.

The christian religion has put an end to the cruel diversion of *gladiatorial shows*. It is well known that it was common for men to fight, and kill, each other as a public entertainment, to thousands of spectators. This horrid custom prevailed at Rome even in its more civilized and polished times. Emperors, magistrates, and opulent citizens, in order to ingratiate themselves with the people, gave these shows at the funeral of a near relation, or upon any occasion of public festivity. To so enormous a height did this barbarity increase, that sometimes it cost Europe twenty or thirty thousand lives in a single month.—*Lips. Saturn*, lib. 1, cap. 12.—Several laws were made even by heathen emperors to restrain this amuse-

ment within certain bounds. But when the empire became christian, in the reign of Constantine, a law was enacted to prohibit the practice. It was, however, revived again in the times of succeeding emperors, till it was entirely abolished by the emperor Honorius, A. D. 403.

Such cruel superstition prevailed in many ancient nations, that even *human sacrifices* were offered to appease the anger of their fancied deities, and to conciliate their favor. The Carthaginians, when Agathocles was upon the point of besieging Carthage, sacrificed two hundred children of their principal families to Saturn. Beside these, more than three hundred citizens made willing sacrifices of themselves.—*Rollin's Ancient Hist. vol. 1, book 2, part 1, sec. 2, p. 121, 8vo.*—But Eusebius says, through the doctrine of Christ the church of God all over the world has been taught to offer thanksgivings and reasonable services, without the smoke of burnt offerings.—*Lard. Works, vol. 4, p. 218.*

Wherever the gospel has spread, it has also abolished the custom of *polygamy*.—*Eusebius Prep. Evang. VI. 10.*—It has likewise greatly diminished the almost boundless liberty of

divorcing which used to prevail before the appearance of Christ.

The christian religion has excited the professors of it to make large provision for the *education of the poor*, and for the *relief of the indigent and diseased*. That Christians were particularly distinguished for such public humane institutions the emperor Julian, their zealous enemy, attests, as we have already noticed, by proposing their example to the imitation of the Pagans, whom he charges with negligence in this respect. He particularly recommends to them the practice of Christians in relieving strangers and others who were of a different religion from themselves.

Farther, the gospel has rendered the *laws* of those nations in which it has prevailed *more mild, gentle, and humane*. Montesquieu professes in his *Spirit of Laws* to examine the several religions of the world in relation only to the good they produce in civil society. In this work he says, he is not a divine, but a political writer. He adds, that the christian religion which ordains that men should love each other, would without doubt have every nation blest with the best civil, the best political laws; because these, next to this religion, are the

greatest good that men can give and receive.—*Book 24, ch. 1.* He says, that Christianity is a stranger to mere despotic power. The mildness so frequently recommended in the gospel is incompatible with the despotic rage with which a prince punishes his subjects, and exercises himself in cruelty. *Ch. 3.* He remarks, that the principles of Christianity deeply engraven on the heart, would be infinitely more powerful than the false honor of monarchies, than the humane virtues of republics, or the servile fear of despotic states. *Ch. 6.* The same author observes, that the laws always meet the passions and prejudices of the legislator; sometimes they pass through, and imbibe only a tincture; sometimes they stop, and are incorporated with them.—*Book 29, ch. 19.*

All these remarks correspond with the character and the laws of Constantine, the first christian emperor. For the very severe punishments which he appointed for the transgression of some of his laws showed that the temper of the times, or his own disposition, sometimes led him to cruelty. But the following precepts were humane, such as the mild and benevolent spirit of the gospel would naturally suggest. They more clearly manifest, therefore, the influence of christian principles, when com-

pared with the character and situation of the legislator.

“Besides the laws in favor of slaves, and against the exhibition of gladiatorial shows, which Constantine enacted, he ordered that prisoners should be well used, and conveniently lodged. He made laws in favor of debtors. He appointed that poor parents should be relieved out of the treasury, to prevent the exposing and murdering of children. He provided for the children of the poor out of his revenues. Afterwards several charitable laws were made by him and succeeding christian emperors, for the relief of the sick and helpless, beyond what had been done by Pagans. He restrained the frequency of divorces upon slight occasions. He abolished the cruel punishment of crucifixion and of breaking the legs, and of marking the face with a hot iron. He forbade tax gatherers to seize upon men's laboring servants, or oxen, for the payment of debts to government. He restrained exorbitant usury, allowing at the same time fair and reasonable interest. He published an edict in which he declared himself ever ready to hear any well grounded complaints against his officers, governors, and counsellors of state, and promised not only to do justice to the sufferers, but to

recompence them for their pains. He restrained and discouraged, but did not absolutely forbid and suppress, the pagan practice of sacrificing, and consulting the entrails of victims by the haruspices. He destroyed the temple of Venus in Phœnice, which was a school of debauchery. He ordered those Pagans who compelled the Christians to join with them in acts of religion to be bastinadoed, or, if they were rich, to be fined. He ordered churches to be built where they were necessary."—See *Jortin's Remarks*, vol. 3, p. 219 to 236.

As Christianity has already caused the improvement which we have mentioned in the religion, the morals, the manners, customs, and public laws of mankind, the beneficial influence of which altogether is more extensive and more valuable than can be conceived by any human being; so it has widely spread the most effectual means of cherishing, increasing and diffusing these blessings, and of rightly estimating their value and importance.

A firm belief in the most important truths of religion is the only solid basis of universal virtue. Such as, the existence of one only spiritual, eternal, supreme, all-perfect Being, the sole creator, preserver, and governor of all

things; the certainty of a resurrection after death to a future life, judgment and recompense; and the acceptableness of repentance and reformation to God. The wisest Heathens had very imperfect ideas of these principles, and were sceptical and unsettled respecting their belief in the truth of their own notions. But the gospel has established the faith of all who embrace it, in these pillars of genuine piety and good morals. Christians unite in maintaining these principles, how widely soever they differ from each other in the particular modes of explaining them, or how inconsistent soever with these, some other doctrines which they hold may be.

The unity and spirituality of the Supreme Being is an indispensable article of faith even with those who believe, that the one only spiritual God consists of three distinct persons, and that one of these persons did once inhabit a human body.

The sole government of one only all-perfect Being over the world, and his uncontrouled direction of all events, is maintained, even by those who think that a rebellious archangel and his associates have set up a kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God.

The certainty of a resurrection after death to a future life, is equally believed, by those Christians who suppose the thinking principle to be material, and by those who imagine it to be spiritual and immaterial; by those who suppose the mind to be totally inactive and void of perceptions, and by those who think there will be an intermediate state of consciousness, from the moment of death to the resurrection.

Faith in a future state of righteous retribution is alike maintained by those who imagine that the punishment of the wicked in the world to come will be strictly everlasting and without end; by those who think that their punishment after a certain period will be succeeded by eternal death or total annihilation; and by those who judge that their anguish will be inflicted as a corrective chastisement to improve the character, and to fit them for pure and never ending happiness.

All the disciples of Jesus believe that at the final close of the dispensations of God, his wisdom, justice and goodness will be clearly displayed respecting every individual, whether they explain his proceedings according to the best notions of those attributes in mankind, or whether they maintain that the Supreme

Being has from eternity selected a few to be the peculiar objects of his favor, and appointed a great majority to endure for ever the effects of his indignation and displeasure for their iniquities; and even whether he appoints this everlasting anguish in consequence of their moral characters, or independently of these.

Every Christian maintains that sinners will be pardoned upon faith, repentance and amendment, be accepted by God, and qualified for a state of happiness in the future world, how much soever they may differ in their opinions, whether sin be merely personal, or whether it be heritable from our first parents; whether Christ suffered and died only to assure us by his resurrection of this mercy of the Most High to his offending creatures, or whether he bought and purchased the inestimable blessing for us by the sacrifice of his life; whether men have a natural power to believe in Christ and to reform from iniquity, or whether the extraordinary and supernatural influence of the spirit is necessary to a saving faith and the regeneration of the heart.

While these and many other variations prevail among Christians respecting the mode, in which they explain the particular articles

of their common faith, they are all unanimous in making their final appeal for the truth of their sentiments to the same scriptures. Even the Pope, who assumes a right of interpreting scripture for others, coincides with Protestants in referring to the New Testament as the ground of his authority. He claims a power derived from the Apostle Peter, and appeals to the records of the gospel for the commission which Christ delegated to him.—Whether the power thus communicated to Peter was of equal extent with that which the Pope assumes, or whether, though it were given to Peter, the Pope has any just title of inheritance to it, are disputed questions, for the decision of which Papists and Protestants agree in referring to the same books. It is of unspeakable importance, therefore, that the gospel has produced an universal reception among Christians of the same complete written standard of religious faith and moral practice, to which all make their ultimate appeal. By this means, the very book from which such different sentiments concerning the nature and extent of christian truth and obligation are deduced, may, when it is thoroughly and generally understood, be the easy and effectual means of producing unity of faith respecting them.—“The chief mistakes in *philosophy* arose

“from impatience in forming theories, without consulting *nature*; and the chief mistake in *Christianity*, from forming theories without consulting *scripture*.—“When men have taken out of *Christianity* what they have once foisted into it, there will be but one religion, as plain in its doctrine, as pure in its morals.”—*Ben Mordecai's 7th Letter*, p. 888, 889.—*St. Evremond*, vol. 2, p. 68.

In a letter of Pope Pius VI. to Anthony Martini, at Turin, on his Translation of the Bible into Italian, prefixed to the English Translation of the New Testament, at Rheims, *Edinb.* 1797, 12mo. he writes thus:—“Beloved Son, You judge exceedingly well, that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the holy scriptures: for these are the most abundant sources which ought to be left open to every one, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you have seasonably effected, by publishing the sacred writings in the language of your country, suitable to every one's capacity.”

Wherever the gospel has spread, it has caused a uniform reception of the best mode

of moral laws that the world ever saw, and that the human mind can even form an idea of, enforced by the most powerful and persuasive motives, exemplified in the completest character of piety and virtue that ever appeared on earth, and enjoined by the highest and most endearing authority, that of God himself, the parent and governor of all mankind. When we consider the ineffectual efforts that were made by the wisest heathen philosophers to produce a complete system of this kind, or to engage men to adopt what they did draw up, and the absolute necessity of the highest authority to rouse the attention of mankind to it, and to render it effectual to their virtuous improvement, the benefit of the christian precepts and motives will appear to be inestimably great.

Montesquieu said upon his death bed to those who stood around him, and particularly to the Duchess D'Aiguillon, the morality of the gospel is a most excellent thing, and the most valuable present which could possibly have been received by man from his Creator.—*Leland's Adv. and Necess. of Christ Rev.* p. 2, ch. 13, the end of vol. 2.—Mr. Chubb declares, that Christianity yields a much clearer light, and is a more safe guide to mankind than any other traditional religion, as being better adapted

to improve and perfect human nature.—*Leland's Deist. Writ.* vol. 1, p. 340.—Tindal acknowledges it to be a most holy religion, and that all its doctrines plainly speak themselves to be the will of an infinitely wise and good God.—*Lel.* vol. 1, p. 169.—Lord Bolingbroke asserts, that no religion ever appeared in the world whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind.—*Works,* vol. 4, ess. 4, sec. 4, p. 281, 282.—He affirms that in all cases the gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity.—*Fragments,* No. 20, vol. 5, p. 188, 189.

Wherever Christianity has been embraced, it has taught the inseparable connection that subsists between pure religion and good morals, that the former is the basis of the latter, and that the highest degree of virtue is the nearest resemblance to the moral perfections of the Most High. Heathens could have no such ideas, because their gods, even in their own estimation, were frail and vicious.

The gospel has established among its professors stated assemblies for public worship, for religious and moral instruction and reading the

scriptures, every first day of the week, and has instituted the office of pastors and teachers to conduct these services. The emperor Julian was so fully convinced of the good effects of these institutions that he formed similar plans for teaching Paganism, but died before they were carried into execution. *Jortin's Disc. on the Christ. Rel.* p. 153. Such regular public meetings are of more use than is commonly imagined in preserving and increasing good order, virtue, and practical religion in the world. The most abandoned have often acknowledged their first deviations from a right course to have been owing to a neglect of attendance upon them.

Dr. Jortin makes the following observations: "To the gospel and to those who embraced it, we are in a great measure indebted for all the useful learning that is at present in the world. The keys of learning are the learned languages, and a grammatical and critical skill in them. The New Testament being written in Greek, and the Old being translated into it, the study of the scriptures early excited the Christians to learn that language. Jewish and Pagan literature in general became necessary to them, in order to defend their cause against both. And in the third century, when the Latin

language was on the decline, christian writers preserved it from sinking into barbarism. For the monks transcribed and preserved the Greek and Latin classics in their monasteries; and preserved the Theodosian and Justinian codes. And the Roman law being adopted more or less in christian countries, conduced greatly to the preservation of literature in general, and of the Latin language in particular. And as what is good in Mahometanism was derived chiefly from Christianity, though partly from Judaism, to the gospel may be principally attributed the good which the Saracens did by what they contributed in the ninth century to the restoration of letters in Europe.

"The unbelievers educated in christian countries owe what learning they have to Christianity. But none of them have been eminently learned, or material contributors to the advancement of erudition and knowledge. To Christians we are indebted for the knowledge of antiquities, for every thing called philology, or literæ humaniores, for grammars and dictionaries of the learned languages, for chronology, and the continuation of history through many centuries, for rational systems of morality and natural religion, for improvements in natural philosophy, for the application of these disco-

veries, to religious purposes, for metaphysical researches, for the moral rules to be observed by nations in war and peace, for jurisprudence, for political knowledge, for settling the rights of subjects both civil and religious, upon a proper foundation—not to Atheists or Deists. To Christians we owe the great work of the Reformation.

"It must be owned, that at the revival of literature in the Western world, polite and classical literature were cultivated by ingenious and learned men, some of whom are much suspected to have had little or no religion; but they outwardly conformed to Christianity. And learning was improved by real Christians, such as Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, and many others.

"As religion has been the chief preserver of erudition, so erudition has contributed greatly to the support of religion. The useful expositions of the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, the sober and sensible defences of revelation, the faithful representations of pure and undefiled Christianity,—these have been the works of learned, judicious and industrious men. The corruptions of the gospel have been the inventions of men of little learning.

"Now let us suppose, that Christianity had been suppressed at its first appearance, and that no traces of it had been left.

"In this case, it is extremely probable that the Latin and Greek tongues would have been lost in the revolution of empires, and the irruptions of barbarians in the East and in the West. For the old inhabitants would have had no *conscientious* and *religious* motives to keep up their languages. And then together with the Latin and Greek tongues, the knowledge of antiquities and the ancient writers would have been destroyed. Something of this kind appears in the present state of Africa, where the Latin tongue is absolutely unknown, though in the fifth century it was spoken there as in Italy. Idolatry and superstition, in some shape, would have been the religion of the populace, and the upper sort would have been for the most part Sceptics or Atheists, with some Deists. The Jewish religion would possibly have subsisted, confined to its own people, while many of them would probably have been apostates. There would then have been no public schools, no universities for the promotion of erudition.

"For several ages after its establishment, the gospel was of some benefit even to pagan phi-

losophers and learned men, whose notions we find in morality and religion to have been much improved by it, (which cannot be so well accounted for in any way as by their intercourse with Christians.)—*Jortin's Sermons*, vol. 7, charge 1, p. 361, &c.

We see, then, that where the gospel has prevailed it has abolished pagan idolatry and superstition, with their impure and cruel rites; in many instances it has changed the habits of those who embraced it, from the most vicious and profligate, to regularity and virtue; it has produced characters the most distinguished for genuine piety and moral goodness; it has put an end to many savage and barbarous customs, and has softened and decreased the inhumanity of others; it has rendered the manners more gentle and kind, and the public laws of nations more mild and humane.

The christian religion has, also, diffused the most effectual means of promoting, encreasing, and extending these blessings. It has established the professors of it in the firm belief of the purest and most important religious truths; it has caused the uniform reception of the best and completest code of moral precepts; and of a delineation of the most perfect cha-

acter of piety and virtue as a pattern for imitation; it has produced a general persuasion of the inseparable connection between true religion and good morals; it has instituted teachers of both, and public stated weekly assemblies for the social worship of God, and reading the christian scriptures; it has brought Christians to appeal unanimously to the same excellent written standard of religious faith and moral practice; it has been the chief means of preserving and increasing useful learning and science in the world; and it has spread the several invaluable benefits which we have enumerated, in different degrees, through all the most free and enlightened parts of the earth.

“By the industry and zeal of the Eutopeans, Christianity has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and, by the means of their colonies, has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients.”—*Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, &c. ch. 25, p. 535.

This observation of Mr. Gibbon was made long before the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society; an institution by means of which the christian scriptures have been most rapidly and generally distributed through-

out the earth. The very idea of forming a plan for disseminating these best instructions in pure religion and good morals that were ever delivered, to all nations of men, in their own respective languages, derives its origin from the gospel. It is the natural effect of that enlargement of mind which Christianity produces, and of that universal benevolence which is a characteristic feature of it. What more effectual means could have been employed for the speedy and universal diffusion of truth, righteousness and pity in the world; for refining and exalting the human character to its highest perfection; and for promoting the purest happiness of mankind in general, both in the present, and in the future, life?

Now that all the effects which we have mentioned must be ascribed to the religion of Jesus as their cause, appears from these reasons. Christianity is a cause which has a natural tendency to produce such benign consequences. This cause actually existed in the places where these effects have taken place. And it manifested them after learning, science, commerce, government, arts, and polished manners, had proved themselves inadequate to the production of such invaluable blessings. The history of Greece and Rome, in their most distinguished

periods of knowledge and refinement; and of Carthage, in the greatest splendor of her wealth and commerce, bear ample testimony to this.

The reformation which Christianity effected in the religion and morals of the first converts to it was so speedy and so remarkable, that its adversaries, among the principal of whom were philosophers and persons of the highest rank and power, not only acknowledged it to be the cause, but on this account employed the most strenuous and inhuman methods to prevent its prevalence, and to suppress it entirely. In modern times, also, we have shown that several who have opposed the gospel, have yet borne their testimony to the excellence of its nature and tendency, and to its actual efficacy in reforming idolatry, superstition and vice, in improving the manners, the customs and the public laws of nations, and in diffusing the best means of continuing and extending these blessings.

What has been said, then, is abundantly sufficient to prove, from the nature of the christian religion, from historical facts, and from the acknowledgment of the adversaries, as well as of the friends, of the gospel, that no objection can be made to it from its having been *totally ineffectual* to the reformation of men.

We might even assert that the numerous, extensive, and inestimable benefits which the christian revelation has already imparted to mankind, correspond with its claim to a divine original, afford a presumptive argument in favor of it. This argument is confirmed by some of its most valuable effects being the accomplishment of prophecies uttered at different periods by Jeremiah, Malachi, and Jesus Christ.—*Jer. x. 11, 15. Mal. i. 11. Luke x. 18, 19.*

It may still, however, be contended, that the gospel has fallen short of that *degree* of efficacy in promoting the virtue and welfare of mankind which we might have *expected* from a religion communicated by God.

But in order to make this any reasonable objection to the religion of Jesus, it must be determined before hand in what degree, and at what period, any divine revelation, or this in particular, should and ought to produce those good effects which are expected from it. Now such a decision cannot be accurately formed without a thorough knowledge of the whole design of God in giving this revelation to mankind. Yet can any mortal pretend to this intimate acquaintance with the counsels of the

Most High? When we consider the narrow limit of human faculties, and the vast extent of the christian scheme, intended gradually to spread through the earth, and never to be fully completed in this life, it is to be presumed that many circumstances relative to it would be different from, and even contrary to, our expectations. All the divine operations that come within the sphere of our knowledge are carried on in a gradual and progressive way. Means are used to accomplish the ends proposed. How long a time ought to elapse, in any particular scheme of wide extent, before these means complete the intended purpose, human reason cannot decide. The gospel itself extends our view to a far distant period for the completion of its plan. It teaches us, that it will not be effectual to the total extinction of vice, and the production of universal righteousness, during the whole continuance of the present scene of things. It informs us that in the future state a process of corrective chastisement will be carried on to extirpate all iniquity, and to perfect that renovation which the Messiah's kingdom was erected to produce. No rational argument, therefore, can be raised against the christian religion from its not having been yet attended with so many good effects as we should have expected a religion from God to

have produced, because these expectations themselves are not reasonable. They have no proper ground. They originate from ignorance. Even natural religion and the faculties of reason and conscience, have failed of improving the hearts and lives of men so much as we think we might have expected. Yet is it fair to conclude from hence, that all religion should be rejected, and that our mental faculties are not the gift of God?

It may further be alleged against the divine origin of the gospel, that it has not produced so many, nor such *eminently* good effects, as it is *naturally fitted* to produce.

To this it may be answered, that moral causes work only by persuasion. Their effects, therefore, depend upon the disposition and choice of the person to whom they are applied. On this account, a moral means, though in itself most excellent, may, by the perverseness, or other evil habits, of the person to whom it is offered, produce no good effect, since it is in his option whether he will be influenced by it or no. It is evident, also, that a good moral cause may be, and in many instances actually has been, perverted so as to be made the in-

strument and occasion of bringing about very ill effects. The question, therefore, with respect to moral causes, in order to determine their value, is only whether they are naturally fitted to produce good effects, whether they have an evident and undoubted excellence in their own nature, and would, if properly regarded and applied, be productive of good effects, not whether they have actually produced them; because the actual efficacy of them depends upon circumstances foreign to themselves, namely, the temper and inclination of those persons to whom they are applied. Now since Christianity is a moral means of bringing men to repentance and holiness of heart and life, and does not work upon them by force and compulsion, its excellence may be manifest though great numbers will not apply it to its proper purpose. To expect, therefore, that the gospel should produce all the good effects that it is fitted in its own nature to produce, is unreasonable and absurd, because it supposes that all to whom it is offered will duly regard and apply it. But while frailty and imperfection characterize human nature, how can this be reasonably looked for?

Further, the objection which we are now considering, goes upon the *supposition* of the

excellence of Christianity, and argues from this excellence, that it does not come from God, because men are not entirely guided and influenced by it. Now the inconclusiveness of this reasoning is manifest. If a physician prescribe a sure remedy for a disease, and his patient neglect to use it, or designedly apply it in a manner quite opposite to his direction, and to answer a different purpose, is it any objection to the medicine, or to the physician, that the disorder is not cured, but is aggravated, and becomes fatal?

Christ who knew the excellence and benign tendency of his own religion, though he predicted that it would cause the speedy downfall of pagan idolatry, and would finally prevail over every opposing power, (*Luke x. 18, 19.*) yet he also foretold that in many cases the gospel would fail of producing its genuine good effects, that great divisions, animosities and vices would prevail in his church. *Matt. xxiv. 10 to 12, x. 34 to 36. xiii. 37, &c.*—His Apostles, also, predicted the corruptions of Christianity. *1 Tim. iv. 1 to 3. 2 Thess. iii. 1 to 9.*—These prophecies clearly manifest that the first publisher of the gospel, who was best acquainted with the nature and design of it, did not look for the full efficacy of it in regulating the hearts and lives

of men, as a universal consequence of its being outwardly embraced. He knew that after the gospel should have been published to the world with miraculous attestations abundantly sufficient to prove its divine origin, it would be left to the natural and common course of providence for its further diffusion, and to the free choice of those who professed it, either to abuse, to neglect, or rightly to improve the advantages which it imparted to them. These predictions of Christ and his Apostles, however, not only prove their supernatural foreknowledge of these events, and of the certain prevalence of the gospel contrary to all human probability; but they further argue the sincerity and truth of their pretensions to a commission from God, since neither an enthusiast, nor an impostor, in the disadvantageous circumstances in which they were, would have been forward to make declarations apparently so much to the discredit of their cause.

Thus have we proved, that Christianity, instead of being totally ineffectual in reforming the lives and manners of men, has produced many and extensive valuable effects of these kinds, worthy of a divine revelation. We have shown, also, that though it has not been effectual to that degree which most persons might

have expected, yet that these expectations being founded only on a partial view of the gospel, and an ignorance of the whole extent of the plan, the disappointment of them is no reasonable ground of objection. Finally, we have proved, that the most perfect religion communicated by God to men, could not produce all the good effects that it is naturally fitted to produce, because its efficacy depends upon the manner in which it is received and improved, and the frailty and imperfection of human beings does not admit of their doing any thing completely and perfectly. To argue from the very excellence of the christian revelation that it does not come from God, because men do not always act according to it, is manifestly weak and inconclusive.

It is further insisted upon by the adversaries of Christianity, that the *evil* consequences of it prove that it is not of divine authority.

First, it has been urged, that the introduction of the gospel into the world has been followed by *more ill* effects than *good* ones. The hatred, contention, bigotry, persecutions, wars, and bloodshed, which have taken place among Christians have been mentioned as evi-

dences of this. On this account some would reject Christianity.

But would these persons argue in the same manner upon other subjects? Social union, government, learning, arts and science, are manifestly good means of improving the noblest faculties of mankind, of increasing their virtue, their usefulness, and their happiness. These are their natural tendencies. They may be perverted to bad purposes, and they have been the occasion of innumerable evils. But is this a sufficient reason for declining to employ these means of improving the abilities and the condition of human beings? The best means to accomplish the best ends may be abused. This however is no argument against the utility of the means, when properly applied; nor does it afford the least proof, that such means are not originally bestowed by the great donor of every good gift.

Further, this first statement of the objections against Christianity, assumes as a fact that it has produced *more ill* effects than *good* ones. Yet how can the truth of this be ascertained? Can any single man, or any number of men, have a knowledge of, or enumerate every instance in which it has silently worked

to prevent or reform vice, to cherish and improve virtuous dispositions and habits? or can he reckon up the various good and evil purposes, tempers and actions of all Christians from the beginning, with their widely extended influence? If the records of the church abound with narratives of the vices of professing Christians, are the virtues of sincere disciples detailed with the same exactness? In ecclesiastical as well as in civil history, the baneful effects of pride, ambition, and other evil passions are most dwelt upon. When peace and its attendant blessings prevail, these are not usually thought by historians to be subjects sufficiently interesting to engage the public attention. With respect to social union, civil government, learning, arts and science, or the gospel, a fair estimate of all their good and evil consequences cannot be made by the skill of man. It requires omniscience of the past, the present, and the future, respecting each of them, to make this calculation with any tolerable precision. Now a computation, the truth and exactness of which is beyond the limit of human faculties to ascertain, cannot be a proper ground of human judgment and action. The mind of man, however, is formed with dispositions to approve and pursue whatever is manifestly excellent, without waiting for a computation of

the number and degree of its good and ill consequences. Now the most accurate and impartial judges, nay even some of the most able adversaries of Christianity, allow its excellence and natural good tendency to be pure, unrivalled, and worthy of God.

It may still, however, be alleged, that a religion communicated by God, in order to purify mankind from vice, and to increase their piety and virtue, can never be the occasion of iniquity in *any* instance, since this would be contradictory to its very purpose and design.

The objection in this form goes upon the supposition, that whatever occasions any ill effect, cannot come from God, or that a divine law or plan for the general good cannot be attended with any partial evil.—But the whole course of nature and providence contradict these hypotheses. How many painful bruises, dislocated joints, broken bones, sudden, lingering, and excruciating deaths, are caused by the law of gravitation, which preserves the order of the universe? The powers both of the human body and of the mind, which are undoubtedly given by the Most High to be exerted for the benefit of mankind, are often employed to injure

and destroy them. Reason and understanding which are imparted by the Supreme Being to be the guide of life, and the cherishers, supporters and preservers of virtue, are often made subservient to wicked purposes. Even the distinguished eminence of these faculties in some persons has enabled their possessors to be more vicious, and more hurtful. The best remedies for many bodily diseases are provided by divine providence, though they are often so misapplied as to produce disorder, instead of curing it, and even to cause death, instead of preserving life, and restoring health.

When God, in the usual course of his providence, imparts the means of improving, either our outward condition, our bodily health, or our virtue, he leaves us either to use and improve, or to neglect and abuse them, in any manner and degree, that our inclinations, capacities, and situations, permit. The gifts are from heaven. The employment, the neglect, or the abuse of them, are the acts of man.

In like manner, when the Supreme Being condescends to instruct mankind by extraordinary revelations, he does not *compel* them to receive, imbibe, and practice what he teaches. He communicates to them the means of informa-

tion concerning important truths and duties, and enforces a regard to them by the most powerful and persuasive motives. Yet notwithstanding this, they may continue ignorant of them by neglecting to hear or read what his messengers proclaim as his declarations, or they may hear and carelessly forget, or though they improve in knowledge they may not apply it to practice, or they may abuse it to vicious purposes.

The whole spirit and tendency of the christian religion is to destroy vice of every kind, and to exalt the human character to the sublimest height of virtue, to promote the greatest peace and welfare of individuals and of all mankind. But the evil desires and passions of men prompt them to use every means in their power to gratify them. Reason and religion, being powerful instruments, are employed in the service of the ruling principle. Even the pure religion of Christ has not escaped this profanation. But such a perversion of the surest preventative and remedy of vice, and the greatest promoter of virtue, affords no ground of argument against the gospel. "To say that religion is not a restraining motive, because it does not always restrain, is equally absurd as to say, that the civil laws are not

"a restraining motive."—*Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws*, b. 24. ch. 2.—Agreeably to this even Lord Bolingbroke, who will not be suspected of a bigoted attachment to the gospel, affirms, "that the charges which the enemies of religion bring against Christianity, for contentions among themselves, and persecuting one another for their opinions, is unjustly brought. These effects have not been caused by the gospel, but by the systems raised upon it; not by the revelation of God, but by the inventions of men."—*Works*, vol. 4, p. 313, *ess. 4. sec. 8, and sec. 6 conclusion p. 294.*—*"Of the wars, persecutions, and massacres among Christians, no part of them can be properly ascribed to the gospel, nor can be reconciled to the principles of it."*—*Vol. 5, fragment 33, p. 263, 264.*—The same may be said of any other vices of which professing Christians are guilty. Concerning the persecutions which the disciples of Jesus endured from the Jews and Heathens, it may, in like manner, be asserted that they originated in the persecutors, not in the pure doctrines, the gentle precepts, and the peaceable manners of the first Christians.

It is unfair to attribute an effect to any thing as its cause, when this has not the least ten-

dency to produce it. Still more unjust is it, to ascribe any consequence to a cause which has the strongest genuine tendency to prevent it. Now whoever charges the gospel with producing vice of any kind, adopts this false mode of reasoning. He attributes to a cause which is adapted only to generate the purest and best moral dispositions and conduct, an effect which it not only has no tendency of any kind to promote, but which is directly opposite to its characteristic spirit and principles, which it pointedly condemns and prohibits, and which it prescribes the most effectual means of preventing and suppressing. No argument can be properly drawn from the conduct of the professors of any religion, either for or against the religion itself, unless the conduct naturally flows from its principles. Any objection, therefore, to Christianity on account of the vices of those who profess it, is immediately repelled by the whole genius and tendency of the gospel.

Totally adverse, however, as the christian revelation is to every thing morally wrong, yet from the very perversion of it to evil purposes, and from the wickedness of those who call themselves by the name of Christ, a strong argument may be drawn in favor of its divine origin. For these lamentable facts accomplish the pre-

dictions of Jesus and his Apostles, which were uttered by them when they were in a state of outward depression, and had no prospect of any sufficient natural means to advance their cause in the world. These prophecies, also, presented an unwelcome view to their converts, and would tend more to diminish, than to increase the number of their followers. Such predictions, then, manifested the simplicity and sincerity of Christ and his Apostles, at the time when they were delivered, and the events which have since fulfilled them prove their supernatural foreknowledge, and thus proclaim their commission to have been from heaven.

ESSAY II.

ON THE NATURE AND OBLIGATION

OF

THE PATRIARCHAL,

THE JEWISH,

AND

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

Now in order to the observance of these commands, certain *times* must be fixed for assembling together, and *stated* seasons are necessary for the *regular* and *habitual* performance of it. But at what particular inter-

vals these seasons should recur, mankind, especially in the *infant state* of the world, would be unable to decide. Least of all could they discern what proportion of time ought to be devoted to this purpose in all *future* ages. Nor, if they had formed a competent judgment in the case, could they have secured a coincidence of the *general opinion* with their own. Such infinite varieties and irregularities would have ensued from this partial and uncertain rule of conduct as would have hazarded the loss of public, and consequently of personal religion, or have greatly diminished their influence upon the hearts and lives of men.

Hence it is evident that an ordinance of this sort required the authority of the Supreme Being, the great parent and ruler of all, to secure a general regard to it. The wise and benevolent author of our nature, therefore, determined the fixed periods of time at which mankind should statedly join together in worshipping him, by a positive law given to the first parents of our race. Moses records, (*Gen. ch. 2, ver. 2, 3,*) "that God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made, and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his works which God created."

Dr. Kennicot, (*Diss. II.*) remarks on the second clause of this passage, "that בֵּרַךְ carries "a double idea, first of blessing, secondly of "worshipping by bowing the knee. וַיִּבְרַךְ may "be understood in Hiphil, which conjugation "means to make, or order to do a thing. וַיִּקְדַּשׁ may be rendered upon. וַיִּקְדַּשׁ may also "be understood in Hiphil." He therefore translated it thus:—"And God caused (man) "to bless and worship on the seventh day, "and ordered (him) to sanctify it," or set it apart for sacred uses.

This command was given at the first formation of man. The history tells us so. This is positive evidence. But there is no such proof in favor of the conjecture that Moses might have inserted this order for sanctifying the day, when he wrote the book of Genesis, as a reason for his giving a similar command to the Israelites. The utility of the observation, as a standing memorial of the creative power of the Most High, being the same in all ages from the beginning of the world, there was a propriety in giving the command for it at the conclusion of that work which it was intended to commemorate, and on the first whole day of the life of the first beings on earth that were formed capable of worship-

ping their creator. It would be useful also that an institution so well suited to the nature and circumstances of human creatures at all times, might be traced to the original creation of man. The ordinance being simple, and adapted to the infant, as well as to the mature, age of the world, as an excellent means of promoting religion and good morals, there seemed to be no reason for deferring it for upwards of two thousand four hundred years. This argument is strengthened by the consideration, that God condescended in the patriarchal ages to make frequent extraordinary communications of his will to men as their necessities required.

Further, Moses seems evidently to have formed his narrative in general according to the series of events. How figurative soever the account of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis may be, and to whatever length of duration the periods of time therein mentioned may be extended, still it is recorded in plain language (*Gen. ii. 2*), that God on the seventh day had ended his work, and rested, and ordered (man) to bless and worship on the seventh day, and to sanctify it. The command to worship on the seventh day, and to sanctify it, are so connected with the whole account of the creation as that they cannot properly be separated from each other.

Again, though this history appears, as Sir I. Newton remarks, (*on Daniel p. 5*.) to have been collected from several books, yet Moses had no motive to record any but credible facts. He had strong reasons, however, for omitting any thing that was not credible. For the insertion of a falsity would have defeated the very purpose for which he wrote the history, namely, to impress upon the Israelites, and to perpetuate to all generations of men, the memory of the real transactions of the Most High. From the Pentateuch it appears, that the Hebrews were not inclined to an implicit belief in Moses, but, on the contrary, often opposed and contradicted him.

The falsity of any relation, in the book of Genesis would, also, have been easily discovered. For though this history was traditional in the earliest periods of it, yet it had only five intermediate hands to pass through between Adam and Moses.*

* Adam lived with Methuselah 243 years, who lived with Shem 93 years, who lived with Isaac 50 years, who lived with Joseph before he was sold 16 years, (who saw besides Manasseh's children and grandchildren, Ephraim's children of the third generation, with several of whom Moses conversed, as he was born only 64 years after Joseph died) who lived with Amram (the father of Moses, and grandson of Levi) 14 years.—See *I Chron. vi. 1 to 3*. Shuckford on the Fall, pref. p. 33 Jackson's Chronology, vol. 1, p. 131, 132.

The history, therefore, would be well known, especially as it was not complicated. The lives of the patriarchs were very long, so that many succeeding ones were for a great number of years cotemporaries with several of their ancestors of different degrees. In these primitive ages, also, in which they led a pastoral life, they had much leisure for revolving the facts in their minds, and would be disposed to recollect them often, as they formed the history of their ancestors, the basis of their religion, which was the only true one, the foundation of their present comfort and of their future hopes. They would, therefore, take frequent opportunities of repeating the several circumstances of their history to their children and families; particularly after they were ill treated by those who became idolaters. Directing their attention often to well attested accounts of the creation of the world by the one only God, and of his universal government and providence, would afford them the best consolation and support under all their difficulties. Even in the times of the Apostles of Christ, we may judge from their addresses to the Jews, how customary it was to repeat the circumstances of their early history.—See *Stephen's Speech, Acts, ch. vii. Paul's Address, ch. xiii. 17 to 41.*

But these interesting facts were not left to be handed down by tradition alone, during the whole time from Adam to Moses. For it appears from the book of Job that alphabetical writing was in use when that was composed.—*ch. xix. 23, 24. xxxi. 35, 36.* The author of it is thought to be Job by Goguet and Bishop Lowth, and to have lived before Moses, and to have been cotemporary with the patriarchs.—*De Sacra Poesi Hebr. Præ. 32. Goguet's Origin and Progr. of Laws, Arts, &c. part 1, diss. 2.*—Michaelis and Mr. Good attribute this book to Moses.—*Good's Job Introd. p. 55.*

Now writing was not a new art in the time of Moses. From Gen. v. 1, we find that there was a book of the generations of Adam, or of his descendants. Before the Israelites came to Sinai, where the two tables of the law written by God himself were produced, (*Exod. xxiv. 12. xxxi. 18. xxxii. 16.*) Jehovah commanded Moses to write in a book a memorial of his defeat of Amalek, (*Exod. xvii. 14.*) and to rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. The mode of expressing this precept conveys an idea that writing was an art that he had previously attained. Now written records would greatly facilitate the exact conveyance of the history, and the exposure of any false statement or interpolation, especially

in a matter of such consequence as the appointment of every seventh day for religious worship.

From all the above-mentioned circumstances together, we may fairly conclude that Moses has recorded the precept (*Gen. ii. 3.*) in its proper place, and at the period of the history in which it was given.

Now there can be no doubt, when we consider the general piety of the patriarchs, but that they obeyed this command to worship God every seventh day. The history, indeed, is so very short, that it does not specify any particular instance of this. But there are several circumstances, which deserve attention, that will account for such an omission. The book of Genesis alone comprises the history of the world for upwards of 2300 years. In the earliest ages, accounts of facts, truths, and precepts, were handed down from one generation to another chiefly by oral tradition. When mankind first discovered any method of forming records, either by hieroglyphical or alphabetical writing, their narratives would be concise, and they would naturally omit to insert in them particular instances of what was their regular practice at these short stated intervals; especially as these fixed seasons were so connected

with their common computations of time and other circumstances, as to bear the marks of them in their general transactions. Further, the writers of the brief accounts from which Moses compiled his history, having once recorded the divine appointment of a stated day for religious worship, and the reasons for such an ordinance, might think it useless to notice the regular returns of the actual observance of it.

"In the subsequent narrative of the Old Testament, which is much more diffuse, there is no mention or intimation of the sabbath in all the book of Joshua, nor in Judges, Ruth, the 1st and 2d books of Samuel, the 1st of Kings, till the 2d of Kings, iv. 23, which includes a period of near 500 years."—*Taylor's Scripture Divinity, ch. 6, p. 66.*—

Nor is the right of circumcision spoken of as being actually observed from the 5th ch. of Joshua throughout the whole of the Old Testament, till the 2d ch. of Luke, which is for 1450 years.—*Kennicott's Dissert. p. 156, ed. 2.* It cannot, however, be doubted but that the sabbath and circumcision were both regularly observed during these periods. In *I. Maccab. vi. 53*, mention is made of a sabbatical year, which is the only one upon record in the Jewish history; of sacrifices we find no mention made, between the birth of Seth and the

deluge, yet they were probably offered during that time.

Again, though there is no express account of the seventh day being regularly observed as a day of religious worship in the patriarchal ages, yet there are many passages that allude to, and imply such a custom. In order to obey this command it would be necessary to be exact in counting every seven days, to avoid mistake. If, therefore, we find any fixed period spoken of, the duration of which is not specified, especially if reckoning by seven days was very prevalent in the first ages of the world, it is fair to conclude that such a practice took its rise from this first precept, because it was an origin prior to any other, and because it would lead to the most punctual observance of this period of days, and would naturally be used as a common computation of time in general, from its applying with such convenience to two principal objects, rest from labor, and religious worship. In the first ages there probably was no other way of computing time than by weeks of seven days. For it is natural to suppose that mankind would follow this injunction of their Maker, before they were able to contrive any other method of reckoning time. Indeed till they had invented

some other mode they would be under a necessity of using this.

The first account we have of an act of religious worship is that of Cain and Abel. *Gen. ch. 4, vers. 3 &c.* This was probably social worship, as they seem both to have brought their offerings at the same time and to the same place. Bishop Patrick observes that the word rendered *brought* is never used of domestic or private, but always of public sacrifices brought to the door of the tabernacle.—*See Levit. iv. 4, and ix. xvii. 3, 4, 5.* Each brought his offering at the end of days, as it is in the margin. The word translated *end* Dr. Kennicott observes (*Diss. II.*) means a precise, determinate end, or the extremity. It seems in its most obvious sense *here* to refer to the only mode in which the sons of Adam reckoned their time, namely, by weeks of seven days. Though it is taken in a larger sense in two other places, which are the only ones besides in which it occurs. *I Kings xvii. 7. Nehem. xiii. 6.* The word *days* in the plural sometimes denotes a week, instances of which we shall soon produce. Sometimes *days* means a year. *Levit. xxv. 29, 30. II Sam. xiv. 26. Numb. ix. 22.* A week, a month, or a year. Here יום is the hebrew for both week and year. Dr. Kennicott's translation.

The book of Job, we have observed, is probably as old or older than Moses. Whether the introduction to it be a history of facts or partly allegorical, it records the practice of those times. Now *ch.* i. 6, ii. 1, we are told, that *it was the day and the sons, or worshippers, of God came together to present themselves before the Lord.*—See *Essays on the Language of Scripture*, pages 123, 355. Mr. Grey observes that “the original word here translated, *to present themselves*, denotes the assiduity and frequency with which ministers appear before their king, to receive his commands.” This therefore, evidently alludes to the seventh day which God set apart for his worship. The word *days*, in the plural, is sometimes used to signify a week. See *Gen.* xxiv. 55. *Judg.* xiv. 12. *Gen.* xxix. 20, 27. *The day*, then, means the day of principal attention and notice in the week, or period of seven days. Pliny says, the *Christians* were wont to meet together *stato die*, alluding to the first day of the week. *Epis.* xcvi. lib. 10.

A computation of time by weeks of seven day prevailed from the earliest ages. The writer of the account of the creation *Gen.* i and ii. 2, 3, Noah vii. 10, viii. 10, 12. Laban and Jacob xxix. 27, 28. And Joseph i. 10, used this mode of reckoning. The instances of this upon record

after the Israelites left Egypt are too many to be here enumerated. The habit of computing by the number seven, was naturally adopted upon various other occasions. *Gen.* iv. 15, 24, vii. 2 to 4, xxi. 28 to 30, xxix. 18, 20, 27, 28, xxxiii. 3, xli. 2 to 7, 26 to 30, i. 3, 10, *Jud.* xiv. 12, *Job* xlii. 8. It was applied to sacrifices, to aspersions, to festivals, and to many other circumstances, in the Mosaic law, and in the Scriptures in general both of the Old and New Testament.

In almost all antient heathen nations, also, the division of time by weeks of seven days prevailed. Except the Greeks, the Persians, the Mexicans, and the inhabitants of Cathay in the northern part of China. See *Ency. Brit. Chronology*, No. 15. Nothing in nature could originally lead mankind to this mode of computation. Le Clerc, indeed, conjectures that the seven planets might. But a division of time by weeks of seven days prevailed before the deluge, which was previous to any records that we have of astronomical observations. Nor is there reason for supposing that the planets were then discovered. But when afterwards they were found out, and when men joined the worship of these with that of the true God, they might distinguish days by the names of different

planets. A week of seven days, however, was known to the human race in general from the beginning of the world. See *Sir I. Newton's Chronol.* p. 186. *Grot. de. Verit. lib. i. sec. 16.* The appellations given by the Hebrews to the days of the week, even till the christian æra, were the first, second, and third day of the week, &c. See *Gen. i. Exod. xvi. 5, 22, 27. Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 2. Acts xx. 7. I Cor. xvi. 2.*

Further, the patriarchs had *places* set apart for *social* worship; they had *sacred rites*, and officiating *priests*, from which we may well conclude, that they had *fixed times* for assembling for worship. They led a pastoral life, and therefore were frequently changing their place of abode, in order to provide suitable food for their flocks and herds. In different situations they erected altars to the Most High, to which they sometimes gave appropriate names, and in the character of priests they offered sacrifices upon them. Thus Cain and Abel brought their offerings to God.—*Gen. iv. 3, 4.* It appears that they brought them to the same place, and in the company of others; for, if they had been alone, Cain would have killed his brother upon the spot, and need not have invited him into the field for this purpose.

Ch. v. 8, the samaritan pentateuch reads, "Cain said to Abel, let us go into the field." Noah built an altar, and offered burnt offerings upon it, after the flood, in the presence of his family, who were all of the human race that were preserved alive. *viii. 15 to 22.* Abraham also built altars to the Lord, at which he worshipped him, *xii. 7, 8. xiii. 3, 4. xxii. 5 to 9—13, 14.* Isaac did the same, *xxvi. 23 to 25*, and Jacob, *xxviii. 16 to 22.* Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God, *xiv. 18 to 20.* Jethro, the father in law of Moses, was priest of Midian, *Exodus ii. 16. iii. 1*, and sacrificed to God, *xviii. 12.*

The patriarchs, then, as they had priests and altars, and offered sacrifices in the presence of others, must have had certain *times* for assembling together for public devotion. Now from the universal attention that was paid in those early ages to the division of time into weeks of seven days, is it not highly probable that they habitually met for social worship on every seventh day? Is it likely that at the close of the creation God should particularly command men to worship on the seventh day from the beginning of the creation, though the first whole day of Adam's life, and to sanctify it, and yet that for more than two thousand three

hundred years after, this precept should never be regularly obeyed by those who professed to serve him as the creator of the heavens and the earth, (*Gen.* xiv. 19, 22. xxiv. 3.) and to renounce all other deities? Or is it probable that the institution of a weekly sabbath should at first be enjoined upon the Jews only, while the reason given for the appointment, both at the creation and at Sinai, equally applies to all mankind, from the beginning to the consummation of the world? That the regular observance of this ordinance would contribute much to preserve the true religion among them, may be argued from the opposite fact, namely, that the neglect of it in subsequent ages, was a great means of drawing off the Jews from the true God to the worship of idols.

To the foregoing arguments may be objected what is said, (*Nehem.* ix. 13, 14.) "From Sinai thou madest known unto them thy holy sabbath." Hence it is argued, that the patriarchs knew nothing of a sabbath appointed by God. But it may be replied, that the precept for observing a seventh day sabbath was given at the creation.—*Gen.* ii. 2, 3.—The term *yom* in *Nehem.* ix. 14, rendered *to make known*, signifies also *to manifest, to distinguish, or to manifest in a distinguishing*

manner. In this last sense it is used with reference to the title *Jehovah*, as distinctive from false gods, and as the God of the Israelites, in *Exod.* vi. 3. *Ezek.* xx. 5, 9, 12. xxxv. 11, 12. xxxviii. 23. In like manner a sabbath on every seventh day, probably instead of every first day of the week (as we shall show in treating upon the christian sabbath) was made known to the Israelites, or manifested to them in a peculiar manner, as a distinctive sign between Jehovah and them, that he would acknowledge them as his people, and that they should own and serve him as their God. This, however, did not imply that a weekly sabbath was unknown to them before. God set his bow in the clouds as a token and memorial to all mankind that he would never again destroy the human race by a flood. But this did not imply that a rainbow had never been seen before. The sun shining upon falling drops of rain must before this have produced a rainbow.—*Gen.* ix. 11 to 17.

In *Exod.* xvi. 29, "The Lord hath given you the sabbath," is used in the same distinguishing sense, as the phrase we have already noticed. It is, also, employed with peculiar emphasis soon after the Israelites were brought out of Egypt, because the task masters there

did not allow them to rest from labor.—Comp. ver. 23, 30. v. 5 to 9. i. 11 to 14.

"I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, (Ezek. xx. 12.) signifies the same. As our Lord says, that Moses gave them circumcision, (Jo. vii. 22.) though this rite was first instituted in the time of Abraham.—Gen. xvii. 10.

Let us now briefly review the arguments which we have brought to prove that God at the creation commanded a seventh day's sabbath to be observed by mankind, and that the patriarchs obeyed the precept.

The divine appointment of a sabbath is subjoined by Moses to his account of the creation, as an observance to commemorate it. The reason for the institution, therefore, equally applies to all mankind in all ages of the world. There is no proof that the injunction was not given then. An interpolation of it would have been easily discovered, because the history of the creation and the circumstances connected with it were well known in the time of Moses. They formed a principal and an interesting article of faith with the patriarchs, were often repeated by

them in successive generations to their families, and had only five intermediate hands to pass through, even in the way of tradition. And before the birth of Moses alphabetical writing would greatly facilitate the conveyance of historical facts.

Though no particular instance of observing a seventh day sabbath be expressly mentioned in the book of Genesis, yet the conciseness of the history accounts for this. Especially as in the subsequent larger history of the Old Testament there is no mention or intimation of the sabbath for about 500 years. Nor is the right of circumcision spoken of as actually observed for 1450 years. There can be no doubt, however, but that both these ordinances were regularly attended to during these periods. In like manner, an omission to record the actual observation of the sabbath by the patriarchs, affords no ground to conclude that they did not observe it.

On the contrary, their obedience to this divine command may be fairly inferred from their general piety to the only true God; from the passages that allude to and imply this habit; from accounts transmitted to us of the earliest acts of religious worship; from

the general custom, even in the first ages of the world, of reckoning time by weeks of seven days; from the patriarchs officiating as priests to administer sacred rites, upon altars erected for social worship, in order to the performance of which, fixed times for assembling together were necessary; and what so natural to be adopted as the seasons appointed by that God whom they worshipped, in opposition to all idolatrous deities.

Is not this sufficient evidence for facts of such remote antiquity as to be many centuries previous to any authentic profane history now extant? In such cases, where there is not direct positive proof, circumstances may afford reasonable ground for decision. Twilight may serve to guide our steps, when we cannot have the meridian sun.

On the contrary, their obedience to the divine command may be fairly inferred from their general piety to the only true God; from the passages that shew that they had a high regard to the Sabbath; from accounts transmitted to us of the earliest acts of religious worship; from

the people, till the elders told him what they had done. He then informed them that it was a provision for the rest of the holy sabbath. And the next morning Moses said, eat what remains to-day, for to-morrow is sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field.

THE HEBREW SABBATH

AT THE FALL OF MANNA.

THE actual observance of a seventh day's sabbath, though commanded by God at the creation, is for the first time, expressly noticed.—*Exod.* xvi. 22 to 30. It appears, however, to be mentioned as a well known institution. For, at the falling of manna, though the Israelites gathered some more, some less, on the preceding days, v. 17, yet it is expressly noticed that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much as they were ordered to gather. All the rulers told Moses of this, thinking it was contrary to his directions, v. 16 to 22. But Moses approved what they did according to the command which God had given to him, v. 5, but which he does not appear to have made known to

the people till the elders told him what they had done. He then informed them that it was a provision for the rest of the holy sabbath.— And the next morning Moses said, eat what remains to-day, for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord, to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the sabbath, in it there shall be none, v. 23 to 26. See for (or because) that the Lord hath given you the sabbath (or rest, which probably was not allowed them in Egypt, *Exod.* v. 5 to 9.), therefore he giveth you on the sixth day, the bread of two days. Abide ye every man in his place. So the people rested on the seventh day. 29, 30.

The directions which are given to the Israelites upon this occasion are only concerning what they should do with regard to the manna. There is no reason hinted at or assigned here for appointing such an institution as a sabbath, nor any precept relating to the manner of keeping one, which implies that they were informed of these things before. For it would have been necessary to have mentioned them at the first express appointment of an ordinance of this kind, in order to have conveyed a right idea of it, and of the mode of observing it.

A sabbath, then, and the manner of keeping it, must have been known previously to the falling of the manna.

God, knowing the importance of a regular observance of this institution, immediately upon the Israelites coming out of Egypt, inured them to a habit of regarding it for 40 successive years, by providing them a double portion of food on the preceding day, of which they were obliged to lay up enough to supply them on the sabbath, when they could find none.

Egyptian servitude by the mighty hand of Jehovah their God.

There are several circumstances relative to this command to the Jews which deserve particular notice.

1. Though it is a ritual law, as it appoints stated times for publicly worshipping God (*Exod.* xx. 8 to 11. *Levit.* xxiii. 3, a holy convocation) and for rest from labor, yet it is one of those ten select commandments which were first delivered by Jehovah himself, to all the people of Israel assembled together, in the most solemn manner, amidst thunder and lightning (*Exod.* xix. 20), and which were afterwards written by the finger of God upon two tables of stone, and given by him to Moses.—*Exod.* xxiv. 12, xxxi. 18, xxxii. 16, xxxiv. 1, 28.—*Deut.* iv. 13, v. 22, ix. 10. The finger of God means the spirit or power of God.—*See Exod.* viii. 19. *Ps.* viii. 3. *Luke* xi. 20, comp. *Matt.* xii. 28.

2. It is the only ritual ordinance in these tables. So necessary a connection indeed has it with the moral and religious duty of regular public worship of God that it cannot be separated from it. For it fixes a stated re-

JEWISH SABBATH

COMMANDED AT MOUNT SINAI.

AT the solemn delivery of the law on Mount Sinai.—*Exod.* xx. 8 to 11. God gave this precept to the Israelites. Remember the seventh day "as the sabbath of Jehovah thy God, "to keep it holy and to rest from all labour." The reason given for this ordinance is because on the seventh day God rested from his work of creation and ordered (*man*) to worship and to sanctify it. The rest from work is enjoined upon themselves, their children, their servants, their cattle, and the stranger within their gates.—*See also Levit.* xxiii. 3, 8.

In *Deut.* v. 12 to 15, another reason is also assigned for this appointment, namely, that it might be a memorial of their deliverance from

turn of a season for this purpose, which if some one did not appoint, there could be no regular general public worship of the Most High, because without this, people would not know at what time to assemble.

3. There are, however, *ritual* circumstances peculiar to the law for a weekly sabbath as promulgated at *this time*. It enjoins rest from all labor to all the Israelites, their children, servants, and cattle, and to strangers within their gates. Moses, when he repeats the law to the Israelites, in the book of Deuteronomy, v. 15, enforces the observance of it as a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian servitude.

Though the other festivals were appointed as signs between Jehovah and the Israelites, that he was their God, and that they were his peculiar people, (*Ezek. xx. 12, 20.*) yet the sabbath on every seventh day was made a more especial sign of these, (*Exod. xxxi. 12 to 17. Nehem. ix. 14.*) and in this view of it was limited to the Jewish state and polity, and the stranger within their gates, (*Exod. xxxi. 16.*) and was probably changed to a different day in the week on the same account.—*See, on the Christian Sabbath.*

The ordinance of a sabbath on the seventh day to the Israelites, being a peculiar distinction of the worshippers of the only true God, an obedience to it is enforced by the most awful and persuasive sanctions. The punishment of death by stoning is denounced upon the transgressors of it. Gathering of sticks and kindling a fire are particularly mentioned as acts of disobedience to it.—*Exod. xxxi. 14, 15. xxxv. 2, 3. Numb. xv. 32 to 36.* The sabbath being a sign of the covenant between Jehovah and his people, a non-observance of it was virtually rejecting the covenant. It was also an act of treason and rebellion against Jehovah, who was their king. To encourage a regard to the sabbath, God declares that he will confer peculiar marks of his favor upon those who honor him on that day.—*Isai. lviii. 13, 14. lvi. 6, 7.*

The sabbath is noticed with singular distinction in the Mosaic law. Though, as we have already observed, it is one of the first and principal commandments given at Sinai, yet it is mentioned again at the conclusion of the moral and ceremonial laws that were delivered to Moses when he was upon the mount. *Exod. xxxi. 12 to 17.* When Moses, also, descended from the mount with the second tables

of the law, he began the precepts of Jehovah with that for the observation of the sabbath.—*Exod. xxxv. 2.* The sabbath is likewise particularly specified at the head of the list of feasts of Jehovah.—*Levit. xxiii. 1 to 3.* Double sacrifices were ordered to be offered to Jehovah on this day.—*Numb. xxviii. 9, 10.* On the sabbath, also, an offering was made to God of the twelve cakes of fine flour, called the *shew bread*, which were set in two rows upon the table of the sanctuary, by burning the frankincense which was put upon each row, and the priests were to eat the bread in the holy place.

The commandment in the decalogue to keep the sabbath is introduced with the emphatical word, *remember*. This could not mean that it was to be observed in preference to the first, second, or any other of the moral laws. For the Mosaic institution prefers moral to ceremonial observances. But it was to be particularly recollected and observed on several accounts that would remarkably forward the principal designs of that dispensation. The main purposes of the Jewish œconomy seem to have been, to present to the view of mankind a visible proof and specimen of the sole government of Jehovah over the world, and an exam-

ple of a people who acted upon the firm persuasion of this truth, by adhering to him, and renouncing all other objects of religious trust and worship; and to impart a valuable code of religious, moral, and civil laws, as means of improvement in piety, virtue, and good order. The best means of rooting evil habits, and of forming good ones, are often a long time in the possession of men before they apply them to their proper use, and longer still before they produce their full effect. This was the case with the Jews respecting the laws given to them from Sinai. But at length, after the captivities which they underwent as punishments for their disobedience, they were cured of idolatry, and to this day worship Jehovah alone.

Now the sabbath appointed at Sinai was in its nature and tendency a direct and powerful means of promoting these ends. For it was ordained—1st, As a memorial that Jehovah was the creator of all things. This is stated as the ground for setting apart one day in seven for rest and worship, agreeably to the original appointment at the creation. As Mr. Mede observes, (*On the Sabbath*, p. 239,) “the
“example of God’s resting after the six days”
“creation is brought for the quatum, one day
“of seven, not for the designation of any

"certain day for the seventh. Whether or no
 "the day on which the Jews were delivered
 "from Egypt was the seventh day from the
 "creation, the scriptures have not informed us.
 "It is called in the commandment at Sinai the
 "seventh day, in respect of the six days of
 "labor, and therefore whenever it is so called,
 "these six days of labor are mentioned with it."

2d. As a memorial that Jehovah with miraculous power delivered the Israelites from Egyptian servitude. This was the reason for appointing so entire and universal a rest from labor on that day, which would be highly grateful to them on their first liberation from incessant work, and would afterwards remind them of their hardships, and impress on their minds a sense of the irresistible power of Jehovah, and of his particular goodness to themselves.

3dly. As a distinguishing sign of the covenant between them and Jehovah, that they would own and obey him as their God, and that he would treat them as his peculiar people. On this account the day for worship was changed from that on which idolaters worshipped the sun, to another day appointed by Jehovah their Creator and Deliverer, for the worship of him alone. 4thly. The regular observation of the appointed day with such views, would be a direct and strong means of detaching them from all

idolatry, of preventing public and private vice and disorder, of cherishing and improving the knowledge, love, and practice of pure religion and virtue, both in individuals and in the community. Agreeably to this Dr. Prideaux remarks (*Connect. part 1, book 6, p. 559, 560,*)
 "that the Jews before their captivity to Babylon
 "were prone to idolatry, because they had then
 "no synagogues for stated public worship or
 "public instruction, nor any places to resort
 "to for either, except the temple at Jerusalem,
 "the cities of the Levites, or the schools of
 "the prophets, while there were prophets.
 "But after the Jews returned from their captivity, synagogues were erected in every city,
 "to which they resorted for public worship, and
 "where *every week* they had the law from the
 "first, and, from the time of Antiochus's persecution, the prophets also read to them, and
 "by exhortations they were instructed in their
 "duty there *every sabbath*, and excited to
 "observe it. In consequence of this, the law
 "of Moses was never more strictly observed
 "by them than from the time of Ezra, when
 "synagogues came first into use, to the time
 "of Christ, though they had corrupted it by
 "mixing traditions with it."

...of preserving public and private
...of christianity and improving the
...of knowledge, laws and practice of this religion
...and while both in individuals and in the
...community, it appears to this Dr. Kennicott
(*Council part 1, book 8, p. 559, 560*)

THE
CHRISTIAN SABBATH,

...were prone to identify themselves with the
...no transference for which public worship
...public in its nature, and to resort
...to for either, except the temple in Jerusalem.

OR,
THE LORD'S DAY,

...the prophet, while there were prophets
...But after the
...activity, sayings were recorded in every city
...to which they resorted for public worship.

CHRISTIANITY was published at a period
of the world so far advanced in knowledge
and improvement as to be fitted for receiving
the purest and most spiritual religion, such as
would be adapted to all future ages, till the
consummation. As little of external and cere-
monial service, therefore, is introduced in it
as is consistent with a religion intended for
all mankind. Public worship of the Most
High being a natural and necessary duty, in-
cumbent on all rational creatures, is not pec-
uliar to any one divine institution. The *modes*
and *circumstances* relating to it, however,

have been varied, so as to suit the different
states and conditions of the human race, in
different ages.

The particular *day* appointed for public
worship has been changed in different dis-
pensations; though one day in seven has been
from the creation divinely appointed for this
purpose.

The Patriarchs, and the Jews, inhabited
the Eastern part of the globe, where there
was no great difference respecting the time at
which their *day* commenced in the different
situations in which they lived. But the ap-
pointment of a fixed *day* to *all* the inhabi-
tants of the earth, must be understood of a
revolutionary day, that is, as each part, while
the earth moves round its axis, comes oppo-
site to the sun, so as to be enlightened by
it. For when it is noon day with us, it is
midnight to those who are on the directly
contrary side of the globe.

It is probable, however, that even to the
Patriarchs and the Israelites, the same pre-
cise day was not fixed by divine appointment
for the sabbath of both. Dr. Kennicott (*Dissert.*
II. Note p. 184.) observes, "there is great

"reason to think that the sabbath of the
 "Israelites was altered with their year at their
 "coming forth from Egypt. At the finishing of
 "the creation, God sanctified the seventh day,
 "which was the first whole day of Adam's life.
 "From this therefore, he probably began his
 "computation of the days of the week. Thus
 "the sabbath became the first day of the week.
 "Afterwards when mankind became idolators
 "they first worshipped the sun, and called
 "the first day of the week Sunday, which
 "they observed as a day of worship to the
 "sun. That Sunday was originally the first
 "day of the week, and continues to be so
 "in the East, is proved by Selden in his
 "*Laic of Nature and Nations*, book 3. ch. 22.
 "The sabbath of the patriarchs, then, was
 "the first day of the week, and the Sunday
 "of the idolators. When the Israelites were
 "brought out of Egypt, God altered the be-
 "ginning of the year, (*Exod. xii. 2. xiii. 4.*
 "*Deut. xvi. 1.*) and of the day (*Exod. xii. 17.*
 "*Levit. xxiii. 32.*) and changed the day of
 "their worship from Sunday to Saturday, to
 "to preserve them more effectually from join-
 "ing idol worship, and especially to perpe-
 "tuate the memory of their deliverance on
 "that day from Egyptian slavery.—*Deut. v. 15.*
 "The sabbath of the Christians, therefore, na-

"turally reverted to Sunday, after the abo-
 "lition of judaism, without any express com-
 "mand for the alteration." And Justin Martyr
 (*Apol. 1st Edit. Thirlby. p. 98.*) affirms "that
 "he observed the Sunday Sabbath; which,"
 he says, "was the day on which God had
 "finished the world, and Jesus Christ, our
 "Saviour, on the same day, arose from
 "the dead." Besides changing the day of
 worship, God also, in some instances, dis-
 pensed with strict obedience to the sabbatical
 law, even under the Mosaic institution. When
 Jericho was taken, one of the seven days on
 which the priests were ordered successively to
 encompass the city must have been a sabbath.
Josh. vi. 2 to 4. Circumcision was allowed by
 the law to be performed on the sabbath day.
John vii. 22. While the temple stood, the sa-
 crifices were slain, and prepared in it, on the
 sabbath.—*Numb. xxviii. 9, 10.*

Other ceremonial observances were some-
 times dispensed with by God. The Israelites
 omitted circumcision during the whole time
 that they were in the wilderness, without be-
 ing reproved by God for it.—*Josh. v. 4 to 7.*
 The passover, in particular circumstances, was
 allowed by Jehovah to be kept in the second
 month instead of the first, and also to be ob-

served by many who were unclean.—*II. Chron.* xxx. 2, 3, 17 to 21. compared with *Numb.* ix. 2, 3, 5, 6 to 11.—See also *I. Sam.* xxi. 8 to 14. compared with *Deut.* xxi. 22, 23. and *I. Sam.* xxi. 1 to 6. compared with *Levit.* xxiv. 5 to 9. and *Hos.* vi. 6. *Matt.* xii. 1 to 8.

Jehovah limited the law of the Jewish sabbath not only to the people of Israel, and to those who were in their gates, but also to the duration of their state and polity.—*Exod.* xxxi. 16, 17. The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe it throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; that is, throughout their generations, as long as they continued to be his peculiar people.

The Hebrew teachers, indeed, in general allow that work may be done on the sabbath day at the command of a prophet. They further grant that the strict observation of days enjoined by the Mosaic law, will be taken away under the Messiah. They infer this from *Isai.* lvi. 17, 18. lvi. 23.

When Jesus came, therefore, as the great Messiah of God, he asserted his claim to a

dominion over the sabbath. The Pharisees observing his disciples plucking ears of corn to eat on the sabbath day, told him that this was a transgression of the law. In reply to them our Lord first vindicated his disciples by producing similar instances out of the Old Testament; and then adds, with his accustomed dignity and simplicity, "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."—*Matt.* xii. 8. *Mark* ii. 28. *Luke* vi. 5. "A sabbath, therefore, must be one of the ordinances of his kingdom, or he could not with any propriety stile himself the Lord of it. He never pretended to be Lord of any merely Jewish ordinance, of circumcision, of the feast, of the new moon, of the passover, of pentecost, of tabernacles, or of sacrifices. These belonged to another dispensation of which he was not the Lord. But he is the Lord, the King, and Head of the Christian church and dispensation, and its ordinances, and of the sabbath as one of its appointments." *Taylor's Script. Divin.* ch. 6, p. 69. When he himself tells us so we must surely believe him. If in *Mark* ii. 28. we appear to any person to be so connected with *ἐξουσία* in ver. 27, as to show that the phrase *Son of Man* in ver. 28. denotes the species, or mankind, it may be replied, that in the paral-

lel text *Matt. iii. 8.* it is clearly applied to *one greater than the temple*, in ver. 6; namely, Jesus Christ. Further, *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, with the article to both words, is always appropriated in the New Testament to Jesus Christ, and this meaning is peculiarly suitable to the connection of the passages which we are considering, in all the three Evangelists; for all of them immediately subjoin an instance of the divine authority of Christ to correct the then prevailing errors concerning the sabbath, by miraculously restoring a withered hand; on the sabbath, contrary to the decision of the Pharisees and Jewish Rulers.—*See Ess. 14. on the Language of Scripture, ch. 3. sec. 4. pp. 246—8.*

The dominion which Jesus claimed over the sabbath he actually exercised, while he was upon earth during his ministry, and after his resurrection, and, when he ascended to the Father, by his apostles who received their commission from him.

One method in which he exercised his power respecting the sabbath during his ministry was, by pointing out the prevalent abuses of this institution, and giving directions for the right observance of it. Even under the Mosaic œconomy, when the Jewish teachers incul-

cated such a superstitious regard to the day as preferred the letter of the law to the true spirit of it, and external rites to acts of humanity, Christ, in order to discountenance this perversion of a divine, and universally valuable ordinance, authoritatively declares, "that the sabbath was made for man," that is mankind in general, "and not man for the sabbath."—*Mark ii. 27.* This decision corresponds with the reason given for the original appointment of it at the creation, which is repeated in the fourth commandment delivered at Sinai.

Further, in order to manifest his sentiments of the nature of the sabbath, and to rectify the common superstitious abuses of it, Jesus persisted with firmness and dignity in performing miraculous deeds of mercy on that day, though the Jewish teachers vehemently reproved him for acting contrary to their ideas of sabbatical rest from doing any kind of work. But Christ, from principles of reason and humanity, from the clear precepts of the Mosaic law, from their own practice respecting their cattle, and from the practice of those whom the Jewish doctors themselves allowed to be prophets of God, and therefore to have authority to dispense occasionally with sab-

batical rites, amply vindicated his own doctrine and practice, so as to silence their cavils and put them to shame, and secure the applause and convince the judgment of the rest of his auditors.—*Matt. xii. 1 to 13.* compared with *Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25.* *I. Sam. xxi. 1 to 6.* *Hos. vi. 6.* *Luke. xiii. 10 to 17.* *xiv. 1 to 6.* *John. vii. 22 to 25.*

The instructions and the actions of Jesus so often and so pointedly opposed and condemned the prevailing erroneous notions and practices of the jews respecting the sabbath, that by these he several times incurred the hazard of his life.—*John v. 16 to 18.* *vii. 19 to 23.* *Matt. xii. 10 to 14.* Now it is inconsistent with the habitual prudence of Christ, to suppose that he would thus have frequently endangered his life, by correcting the abuses of the sabbath, if such an ordinance was to cease when the kingdom of the Messiah was established.

In one instance our Lord manifested his dominion over the sabbath, by not merely performing a miraculous cure on that day, but also by ordering the lame man to whom he had restored the use of his limbs, to *take up his bed* and walk.—*Jo. v. 8.* Now this was con-

trary to the *literal* sense of a command of God given by his prophet Jeremiah to bear no burden on the sabbath day. *xvii. 21, 22.* After his resurrection from the dead, Jesus in the most decisive way, showed his dominion over the sabbath, by authorizing his apostles to change the day on which it was kept from the *seventh*, which was the jewish sabbath, to the *first day* of the week.

The brief narratives of the evangelists do not particularize every single precept that our Lord gave relative to religion and morals, even before his crucifixion. The accounts of his instructions after his resurrection are still more concise. Besides commanding his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations, and appointing them legislators in his kingdom, Luke, however, informs us in general, that he was seen by them forty days, and that he spake to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.—*Acts i. 3.* The observance of the first day of the week might then probably be noticed by him, though on account of the shortness of the narratives it is not recorded. From the evangelists we should never have known that Christ expressly commanded the Lord's supper to be generally observed

by his followers till his second coming to judge the world. If Paul had not written the epistle to the Corinthians, in which he particularly specifies this, it might have been a matter of doubt to the present day. The disciples of Jesus baptized many Jews during his ministry, but his precept for this baptism is not handed down to us; though there is no doubt but that they acted in this by his appointment.—*John* iii. 22. iv. 1, 2.

Adopting a common mode of instruction in the East and in Judea, our Lord sometimes taught by symbolical actions, instead of giving verbal precepts. Thus, by commanding the paralytic whom he had cured, to carry his bed on the sabbath, he, in the most decisive manner, claimed the authority of one who had a divine commission to enjoin an action which, in the strict literal sense, was forbidden by the prophet Jeremiah on that day of rest. By driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple he also asserted the privilege of a peculiar messenger of the Most High to rectify the abuses of public worship, and to prevent any interruption to the devotion of the gentiles, in whose court the different traders transacted their business.—*John* iii. 17. *Matt.* xxi. 12. By performing miraculous cures upon

some heathens, though his peculiar commission was to Israelites, he also manifested the benevolent and expansive nature of his religion.—The Lord's supper is a symbolical action, and was administered and enjoined by Christ as such. In other instances he employed this mode of teaching.

The Jews being habituated to instruction by visible representations, and Jesus himself having sometimes used this manner before his death, he chose, by the clear and decisive action of his repeated presence with his Apostles at the time of their assembling on the day of his resurrection, the first day of the week, to authorize and countenance them in appointing and appropriating this particular day, instead of the Jewish sabbath on the seventh day, for the worship of God. The evening of the very day on which Christ rose from the dead, the apostles and other disciples met together, probably to confer about the proofs of their Master's resurrection. This appears to have been the purpose of their assembling from the account that is given of what passed between themselves, and from our Lord's shewing them his hands and his feet, eating with them, and explaining how the prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in him. He thus gave

them the completest evidence of the reality of his being restored to life. Upon their being convinced by it, and believing in him, at this first meeting, he breathed upon them, (which was another symbolical action) and said, "receive ye the holy spirit."—*Luke* xxiv. 33 to 48. *John* xx. 19 to 23. He had before assured them that they should rule in his church.—*Matt.* xvi. 19. xviii. 18. x. 40. xix. 28. He also promised them still further divine assistance to qualify them for their duty after he left them.—*John* xiv. 16, 26. *Mark* xvi. 19, 20. *Matt.* xxviii. 18 to 20. *Acts* i. 2, 3, 8. ii. 1 to 4. *Rom.* i. 1, 5. *Gal.* i. 1, 11, 12, 15, 16. ii. 2.

Acting upon the commission which they had received from Christ at their first meeting on the evening of the day of his resurrection, the apostles assembled together again the next first day of the week, when he also appeared to them.—*John* xx. 26 to 29. Thomas, who was not with them before, was now present, to whom Jesus offered the evidence which he particularly required in proof of his resurrection. This second meeting of the disciples may be considered as consequent upon their belief at the former. The repeated appearance of their Master to them countenanced

and encouraged their assembling together on this day of the week, for the purpose of establishing their belief in the grand fact upon which Christianity is founded, and of promoting the design of the gospel.

As the disciples probably had several meetings together during this interesting period, why should the evangelist John particularly mention those which took place on the first day of the week rather than any other? and also notice that at those times of assembling Christ appeared to them? Why should Jesus have twice selected this first day of the week to give them the strongest evidence of his resurrection? Why should he have chosen this day to impart to them in a solemn manner extraordinary divine assistance? Why should all these circumstances be expressly recorded by the evangelists as taking place on the first day of the week, and when the disciples were met together, but to encourage the followers of Christ regularly to assemble on this particular day?

The apostle Peter, some years after our Lord's ascension, had presented to him in a vision clean and unclean animals, and a voice commanding him to kill and eat even what

was unclean according to the Mosaic law. By this *symbolical action* he was instructed to do what was full as contrary to Jewish ideas as altering the day of the weekly sabbath, namely, to admit Gentiles into the Messiah's kingdom.—*Acts* x. xi. 1 to 18. It may be said, indeed, that Peter received also a particular divine injunction to go to Cornelius. But this did not command him to receive him, and those who were with him, into the Christian church. The history shows, that it was the Holy Spirit falling on the Gentiles, whom Peter addressed, which finally produced this effect. And upon the ground of both these symbolical actions Peter justifies his conduct, in admitting them as disciples of Christ, to the other Apostles and Christians. His reasons were allowed to be valid, and they glorified God that he had granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life. If the representations, then, which were made to Peter in a vision only, followed by the communication of the Holy Spirit, were considered as decisively instructive symbolical actions, that justified preaching the gospel to Heathens, do not the same reasons apply to authorize and countenance the apostles and disciples in their observing the first day of the week as their sabbath in preference to the seventh. By these symbolical

actions, and by the Divine Spirit, they were guided and directed authoritatively to set aside the Jewish ceremonial law in general. This they did, not by any actual repeal of it, but by the general tenor of their instructions, and by their example.^b The sabbath on the seventh day was part of the ritual, to be observed as a distinguishing sign between Jehovah and the Jews, that he was their God, and that they were his peculiar people. Upon the introduction of the Messiah's kingdom, therefore, which superseded the Jewish polity, and admitted the Gentiles also, this mark of a covenant with a peculiar people ceased of course, without any law to abolish it. In these circumstances it was natural and proper for those Jews who believed in their Messiah, to recur to the original day appointed by God at the creation, as it was also precisely adapted to commemorate the resurrection of their Lord. The reasons at first given for setting apart this particular day were applicable to all mankind coincided with the

^b The Apostolic decree.—*Acts* xv. 23. &c. coincides with this. *Rom.* xiv.—*Gal.* xi. 1 to 5, 11. v. 1 to 6.—*Ephes.* ii. 14 to 17.—*Coloss.* ii. 14 to 17, by *Sabbaths* *σαββάτων* in the plural in this last text, is particularly meant the sabbaths on the seventh day of the week, for the festivals are mentioned before.—*See Exod.* xxxi. 13 to 17.—*Levit.* xix. 3, 20. xxvi. 2, and many other places, *οὐρανὸν* *οὐρανὸν*

object of the christian sabbath, and were peculiarly adapted to this new universal kingdom.—*Mal. i. 11.* *Acts i. 8.* The symbolical actions of Christ, therefore, which we have noticed, and the practice and countenance of his apostles, seem to be all that was proper or requisite in such a situation to change the day.

That the apostles understood that they were authorized by Christ to institute a religious observance of the first day of the week, appears from their conduct. For we find that they regularly met for public worship and instruction on that day, and countenanced and promoted this habit among those who became converts to the christian faith, by their directions. We have before noticed that on the evening of their Master's resurrection, and on the following first day of the week, the apostles and disciples assembled together. In the brief history of the 40 days that Christ remained on earth after his resurrection no other instance of this is recorded.

But ten days after our Lord's ascension, at the feast of pentecost, they were all (about 120 steady believers in Jerusalem, *Acts i. 15*) with one accord in one place.—*Acts ii. 1.* This was probably on the first day of week.—See

Whitby's App. to Mark; Doddridge, Lightfoot, and Newcome on Acts ii. 1.

The miraculous power of speaking in various languages, with which they were before unacquainted, being now imparted to them, affords an instance of extraordinary and remarkable countenance and approbation, manifested by God and Christ to the setting apart this first day of the week for religious purposes. On this day 3,000 persons were converted, and made a public profession of Christianity at the hazard of their lives. They also continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. Breaking of bread here means the Lord's Supper, as in *I. Cor. x. 16, 17. xi. 24.* though in *Acts ii. 46,* it signifies only a common meal.

The apostle Paul, in his first letter to the christian church at Corinth, which according to Lardner was written A. D. 56, writes thus, xvi. 1, 2,—“Now concerning the collection for ‘the saints,’ (namely, the suffering Christians in Judæa) ‘as I have given orders to the ‘churches in Galatia, even so do ye. Upon ‘the first day of the week, let every one of you ‘lay by him; treasuring up according as he

"prospereth, that there be no collections when "I come." (*Newcome.*) The word συναγῆσαν being used, and Paul desiring to have no collections when he came, imply that he would have them put what they had laid by into the public treasury of the church. Now why should he direct the churches of Corinth and Galatia to make these collections on the first day of the week, but because they assembled on this day for public worship, on which account the collections would be more conveniently made?

Another instance of this custom occurs when Paul was at Troas, about two years after he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians.—*Acts* xx. 7. "Upon the first day of the week," "when the disciples came together to break "bread, Paul preached unto them." &c. On this first day of the week the disciples *were themselves συναγμενοι assembled*, not as Paul

* *Μία των σαββάτων* means, the first day of the week.—*Luke* xxiv. 1.—*John* xx. 1.—*I. Cor.* xvi. 2.—*Matt.* xxviii. 1. *ἡμέρα μία τῶς μηνός* signifies the first day of the month.—*Ezra.* xlii. 2.—*Ezra.* iii. 6. x. 17.—*Sept.*

Μία τῶς μηνός means also the first day of the month.—*Levit.* xxiii. 24.—*Numb.* i. i. 18. xix. 1.—*Deut.* i. 3.—*Ezek.* xvi. 1.—*Hag.* i. 1. &c.—*Sept.*

sent from Miletus to Ephesus *μεταβαλλέν* to call to him the elders of the church.—ver. 17. To break bread, that is to partake of the Lord's supper, which they did when they publicly met together in the church every Lord's day.—*I. Cor.* xi. 20 to 26. *Whitby on Acts* xx. 7.

For the continuation of these practices, namely, assembling on the first day of the week, for public worship, for partaking of the Lord's supper, and for making charitable collections for the indigent, there is ample testimony from the most credible authors.—See *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.* vol. 1, p. 101. *King's Inquiry*, part 2, ch. 7, sec. 6 to 10.

Had the first Christians been guilty of any impropriety in assembling for public worship on the Lord's day, Paul would have admonished them for it, as he did for behaving improperly when they were met together. For he often reproves them for doing what was not suitable to the spirit of the gospel.—*I. Cor.* i. 11, 12, iii. 1 to 4. vi. 1. xi. 17 to 22. *Gal.* ii. 11 to 14. But he joined their assemblies, and gave some directions relative to their conduct at them on this day. These things imply his approbation of their observing it, and are similar to precepts for this purpose, since a divine messenger

could never give directions about the proper conduct on a day appropriated to religious services, when it was improper to set it apart for these uses.

Agreeably to the authoritative directions and practice of the apostles, we find the first day of the week early distinguished by the appellation of *the Lord's day*. John relates that he received his revelation on the Lord's day.—*Rev. i. 10.* This shows that the apostles were persuaded they acted according to the will of their Master in observing that day, and manifests that *the Lord's day* was the name commonly used among Christians for the first day of the week, A. D. 95 or 96, when, according to Lardner, the Revelation of John was published. The same appellation continued afterwards to be applied by all the primitive Christians to the first day of the week.—*See King's Inquiry, pp. 124, &c.* It is thus distinguished from common days. In like manner the Lord's supper is distinguished from common suppers, (*I. Cor. xi. 20, 21,*) as being appointed in commemoration of our Lord. It is called the Lord's cup; (*v. 27*) for the same reason. In *v. 20*, *κυριακον δεσπον* is translated in the Syriac version, *a meal which is proper for the Lord's day.* We call the prayer which

Christ gave to his apostles, *the Lord's prayer*, to signify that it was delivered by Christ, and to distinguish it from all other prayers. The apostles are called the apostles of *the Lord*, to denote that they were commissioned by Jesus.—*II. Peter iii. 2.*

From the preceding observations then, it appears, that before the christian æra the precise day of the week for the sabbath was changed at the falling of manna; that under the Mosaic institution the strict observation of the ritual parts of the sabbath was limited to the Israelites and strangers within their gates, and was in several instances dispensed with by God; that the Jewish teachers allow that their exact observation of days will cease when their Messiah appears; that agreeably to this Christ did claim a dominion over the sabbath; that he really exercised this power during his ministry by pointing out and rectifying the abuses of it, and working miracles on it, though both these were so contrary to the prevailing authoritative notions and practices, as to incur the hazard of his life. He further manifested his dominion over the sabbath after his resurrection. 1st. By personally meeting and instructing the apostles when they assembled on this day for religious purposes, which were

actions that proclaimed his approbation. 2dly. By imparting to them at the very first of these meetings, on the evening of the day of his resurrection, the Holy Spirit. 3dly. By giving them authority, both before and after this, to act as legislators in his kingdom. Finally, he showed his power over the sabbath ten days after his ascension, by communicating on this first day of the week, while his disciples and apostles were assembled together, as before, the miraculous ability to speak several different languages. In consequence of this the apostles on that very day began to preach the gospel to great multitudes, from various nations, collected in Jerusalem. They also continued, and encouraged Christians in general to assemble together on the first day of the week, for the public worship of God, and the commemoration of Christ by the ordinance of the supper, which he instituted. *John*, also, calls this the Lord's day, which shows that the apostles were authorized by their Master to set apart this day for religious purposes. Christians in general called the day by the same name, and applied it to the same uses. Though there is no express verbal precept for a sabbath on the Lord's day, can arguments be found equally strong with those which

have been produced for the religious observance of any other day of the week by Christians? Are not these reasons sufficiently clear and powerful to sway the judgment and to direct the conduct? Do not the presence of Christ with his apostles on this day, his symbolical actions in this case, and the uniform practice of his apostles and deputed legislators in his kingdom, joined with their directions concerning proper conduct on that day, carry an authority with them similar to that of an express command, and impose an obligation upon his followers to imitate and obey them?

Setting apart the day on which Christ arose from the dead, for religious worship, was particularly useful in the *infant* state of the church, and will continue to the *end of time* to subserve the cause of religion and the gospel, in the most essential and important manner.

This change of the day from the seventh to the first in the week, would pointedly intimate to the Jews, that under the reign of the Messiah the Mosaic ritual would cease to be obligatory. For the sabbath on the last day in the week being appointed to the Israelites as a distinguishing sign between Jehovah and them, an alteration of it to the first day

abolished this mark of distinction.—*Ephes. ii. 15.* It also substituted in its place another object of attention, the resurrection of the Messiah, that ensign to the people, to which *Isaiah* foretold that the gentiles should repair, *xi. 10, lx. 3.* The ordinances of his universal kingdom, therefore, would have nothing in them peculiar to any single people, but would be adapted to the human race at large.

Further, the religious observance of the first day of the week, on which Christ rose from the dead, would fix the attention of Christians upon the great fact on which their hopes of a future life rested, and would establish their assurance of the divine commission of their Master, by leading them to an habitual contemplation of it on every seventh day, as a miraculous accomplishment of his own frequent and distinct predictions, in the presence both of enemies and friends, before his crucifixion. Now if a change of the day for public rest and worship were proper in order to adapt it to a local and temporary divine dispensation for religious improvement; is not another change suited to the last and most perfect dispensation of God to mankind in general, equally proper; especially if this naturally dispose the mind to dwell more frequently and intensely

upon the strongest and most pleasing motive to piety and virtue.

Again, the first day of the week, being the first whole day after the creation of the world was entirely finished, and also the first day of the new creation or renovation of all things by Christ (*Ephes. iii. 9. ii. 10, 15. iv. 24.*) which implies the original production by God, both the objects of appropriating one day in seven to rest and religious worship are attained by observing this day. It leads to the contemplation of God as the creator and governor of the universe, and of Christ as the messenger of his great design to reform the human race and fit them for future happiness.

The religious observance of the first day of the week does not only serve, upon every single return of the day, to impress a conviction of the validity of the evidence, and of the importance of the truths and obligations of the gospel, but the continuance of the custom perpetuates these valuable effects of it from one generation to another; and affords a proof of a peculiar kind for the divine authority of Jesus and his religion to distant ages. For if the resurrection of Christ had not been a real and well attested fact, it cannot be fairly

accounted for, why the apostles and first Christians, and their successors without interruption from the time at which it is related to have taken place to the present, should have regularly kept this day in honor of him, and in commemoration of his rising to life again. See this argument enlarged upon in *Internal and Presumptive Evidences of Christianity*, part 4, ch. 9. pp. 606, &c.

The regular observance of the first day of the week for religious worship and the public reading of the christian scriptures is an excellent means of preserving them pure and free from important errors and interpolations. As the lives and fortunes of the first Christians were hazarded by their professing a belief in the records of their religion, the stated public reading of them on every weekly return of the day of their Lord's resurrection must have peculiarly impressed them on their minds. They were so deeply interested in the truth of these writings, that, for their own sakes, they would not admit any alterations in them, but upon the best evidence. When various opinions arose about the authenticity or the meaning of particular passages, those who entertained different sentiments would be a check upon each other

against making any material changes. If alterations were at any time, from the first publication of the scriptures, attempted to be made, they must, by statedly reading them in the churches at such short intervals, soon be publicly known, and of course would be speedily corrected. The regular public reading of the scriptures in all the churches on every Lord's day, requires at least one copy of them for the use of each church, and this would lead individuals to transcribe them, which would early spread many copies to distant places, and thus increase the difficulty of making any alterations, or render it impracticable without detection; as the Marcionites experienced.

The regular meetings of Christians for public worship and religious instruction on the Lord's day, have been a principal means of preserving and spreading the gospel in the world. Gregory Nazianzen (*Oration against Julian*, *Prideaux Connec.* part 1, b. 6, p. 560) says, "that Christianity, notwithstanding the ten persecutions and all other opposition, increased by means of the weekly meetings of Christians in their churches, in which every Lord's day from the beginning all the doctrines and duties of their religion were taught, inculcated, and

explained to them. This the emperor Julian was so sensible of, that, when he had exerted his utmost to restore heathenism, he could not think of any way more effectual for this purpose than to employ his philosophers to preach it up *every week* to the people, in the same manner as the ministers of the gospel did the christian religion. But he was cut off before his scheme was executed." Sozomen relates (*lib. 5, cap. 15*, *Lardner's Works, vol. 8, p. 420*) that "Julian would not permit the Christians to meet together, and offer the usual prayers. He banished the clergy and president out of the cities, intending by their absence to abolish the assemblies of the people, when there was none to teach them, nor perform the accustomed rites, that in length of time the memory of their worship should be lost."

Observing a stated weekly period of rest and worship on the first day of the week, excites in the mind a pleasing and useful anticipation of that future state of rest from worldly trials and anxieties, and of active social service of God without weariness, of which the *fact* of our Lord's *resurrection* assures all good persons. If the proper employments of the day be serious, they are not gloomy. Reading and

hearing the scriptures present the most cheering and sublime ideas to the mind, by the views they give us of the perfections of God our heavenly Father, and of his plans for promoting the present and everlasting happiness of mankind. They enlarge the understanding, purify the heart, expand social affections, and excite us to be workers together with God in forwarding the highest improvement and felicity of ourselves and of our fellow creatures. *Joint* attention to the word of God in public assemblies increases our love and reverence of the Most High, attaches us to all mankind as his children and our brethren, and animates to active, steady, and universal obedience to his will. Social communion at the table of our common Lord, united prayers, and hymns of grateful praise, to the God and Father of all, elevate the mind above this transient scene of things, to the permanent realities of that future and immortal life which Christ, the first fruits of them that slept, has so clearly brought to light. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews enjoins a regular attendance upon public worship, in order to establish christian faith, and to promote a practice suitable to it.—x. 23 to 27.

As to the manner in which those hours of the christian sabbath should be spent that are not

employed in public religious assemblies, no express precepts are recorded. We are left, therefore, to infer this from the general tenor of the New Testament, and from the particular purpose and design of this institution. The liberal spirit of the gospel requires no unnecessary rigorous performance of external duties. It does not dictate such an entire cessation from work of every kind as the law of Moses commanded. It enjoins outward observances in subservience to the religion of the heart and life. Now as the usual habits of labor and amusement on other days, if continued on a day appropriated to religious objects, would prevent or diminish the good effects of public devotion and instruction, by diverting the mind to a quite different train of ideas, and effacing serious impressions, so by declining to exercise the common occupations of life, and to join in trifling diversions, the beneficial effects of public services may be continued and increased, by affording more leisure and opportunity for private and secret exercises of piety, reading the scriptures, and other means of improvement in the knowledge and practice of true religion, virtue, and christianity.

Necker remarks that "the nations where the spirit of religion is best preserved, have

"the greatest respect for the sabbath."—*On Religious Opinions*, ch. 9, the note. In China, where there is no fixed day of rest set apart for religious worship, nor any congregational worship, the morals are most depraved.—*Barrow's Travels in China*, ch. 4, p. 153.

To the foregoing observations, it may be objected, that public worship and rest from the common business of life one day in every seven, occasions such a frequent suspension of labor, as to injure both the rich and the poor.

Upon examination, however, it will appear, that stated rest and religious worship on every first day of the week, so far from being hurtful to any part of the community, are highly beneficial to all ranks of men.

True religion is the only firm basis of universal virtue. Good morals are necessary to the good order and happiness both of individuals and of societies of men. Public devotions to God, and public instructions from his word, are excellent means of preserving and increasing pure religion and good morals among persons in every station. Piety and virtue are *habits* of mind and conduct. Habits are formed

by repeated acts, at intervals that do not fatigue. The social principle gives great animation to whatever we do in company with others. This principle operates strongly and pleasingly in the formation of virtuous and religious habits. A discontinuance of *regular public* acts of christian piety, and of *public* instruction from the scriptures, would chill the ardor of ingenuous minds. Deprived of the reviving cordial of the public countenance, the Bible, the best guide and the greatest consolation of human life, would soon lie a neglected treasure, piety would be discouraged, and benevolence would shrink from arduous and useful exertions. By forsaking the assembling together before the common centre and bond of union and felicity to all intelligent creatures, the delicate ties of social affection would be weakened, selfish passions and desires would increase, the human mind would be debased, its views would be confined to temporary and worldly objects, and joyful confidence in God would be changed into gloomy despair of any wise regulation of events. Hence would arise general confusion, disorder, and misery.

Nor would either individuals or the com-

munity derive any *worldly* advantage from the *additional* labor of the poor on the *first* day of the week.

Where wages are now reduced to what is only sufficient to satisfy the daily and indispensable wants of the labourer, the same causes which at present keep them at this lowest state would continue to produce the same effect, if the poor were to work *every* day, instead of resting one day in seven. And the addition of one seventh to the general stock of labor, would come in aid of the operation of these causes to keep down the rate of wages.

Where wages are regulated by the quantity and supposed value of the work, the additional labor of the *first* day of the week would increase the stock of labor in the market one seventh, and would have the same effect, while the strength of the poor continued, as adding to the number of workmen in the same proportion, *i. e.* it would reduce the price of work correspondently. So that labourers would very soon receive no more for seven days' labor, than they do now for six. Thus the *poor* would have a great increase of work by the

abolition of a sabbath, without any extraordinary recompense for it.

But suppose they constantly received one day's usual wages more for this additional labor, yet hard working every day for the common number of hours, would surpass the general measure of human strength, if persisted in for a course of years. It would strain and enfeeble the active powers, would produce disease, hasten decrepitude and death, and in time greatly diminish the number of workmen. Now as the poor are the majority in all nations, the health and constitutions of this majority would thus be impaired, labor would be more languid and less productive, population would be considerably decreased, and the growing evil would be severely felt by the middling and higher classes of the community, who depend entirely upon the exertions of the indigent for all the necessities, conveniences, and elegancies of life.

The abolition of a weekly sabbath, then, for rest and religious worship, would be an incalculable injury to all ranks and conditions of men; and the regular observance of it contributes largely to the promotion of good order, virtue, and piety, and of the present and future happiness of mankind.

Of such high importance did God esteem an habitual regard to a weekly sabbath, that it was the very first appointment which he made at the creation to mankind, to the Israelites when they left Egypt, and to Christians after the Messiah was risen from the dead. The history of both Jews and Christians manifests the utility of the institution where it is duly observed, and the decay of genuine piety and virtue consequent upon the neglect of it.

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